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Addressing gender bias in the workplace: Development of a leadership training program for women in management positions

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Addressing gender bias in the workplace: Development of a leadership training program for women in management positions

Abstract

This study examines the experiences of women leaders related to leadership identity development, coping with overt and covert gender bias in the workplace, and strategies for success. The study utilized a semi-structured interview format to examine participants' lived experiences as leaders, to elicit feedback on what forms of support they needed to be successful, and discover what individual and organizational factors contributed to their success. The analyzed data were used to develop an organizational leadership-training model for women. Interviews were analyzed cross-sectionally and prevalent themes from the qualitative data were noted and explored to determine areas deemed important for the development of a leadership program for women transitioning for the first time into a managerial position. Coded interview data were sorted into ten unique categories: (1) participants' comprehensive belief systems, (2) early influences and precipitating factors, (3) support systems, (4) leadership styles, (5) mentorship, (6) strategies and skill sets, (7) rewards of leadership, (8) challenges of leadership, (9) work-life balance, and (10) gender bias. Based upon interview data and previous research, an organizational training model for women leaders was developed. Recommendations for implementing a leadership-training model are provided.

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ADDRESSING GENDER BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE: DEVELOPMENT OF A
LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

OF

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experiences of women leaders related to leadership identity development, coping with overt and covert gender bias in the workplace, and strategies for success. The study utilized a semi-structured interview format to examine participants' lived experiences as leaders, to elicit feedback on what forms of support they needed to be successful, and discover what individual and organizational factors contributed to their success. The analyzed data were used to develop an organizational leadership-training model for women. Interviews were analyzed cross-sectionally and prevalent themes from the qualitative data were noted and explored to determine areas deemed important for the development of a leadership program for women transitioning for the first time into a managerial position. Coded interview data were sorted into ten unique categories: (1) participants' comprehensive belief systems, (2) early influences and precipitating factors, (3) support systems, (4) leadership styles, (5) mentorship, (6) strategies and skill sets, (7) rewards of leadership, (8) challenges of leadership, (9) work-life balance, and (10) gender bias. Based upon interview data and previous research, an organizational training model for women leaders was developed. Recommendations for implementing a leadership-training model are provided.

Keywords: leadership, women, gender bias, program development

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INTRODUCTION

Women continue to be significantly underrepresented in positions of leadership and power in the United States. Over the past several decades, the number of women who work outside of the home by choice or by necessity has increased exponentially. Despite this change in the landscape of the work force, discrepancies between men and women in the areas of compensation and promotion continue to present obstacles to true workplace equality. Women now make up almost half (47%) of the total U.S. labor force, yet the median earnings of women are still disproportionately low – just 81% of their male counterparts, and it is even lower for Latinas and African American women (United States Department of Labor, 2010). Women currently make up about half of the U.S. population, but only 17% of congress members (Siebel, 2011). Despite past efforts to overcome gender inequality in the workplace, in higher education, and socially, such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title IX in 1972 and *Roe v. Wade* (1973), progress for women's equality has stagnated when it comes to top leadership positions. Women continue to be monetarily undervalued, face both overt and covert discrimination, and take on progressively more precarious leadership roles. Labor statistics illuminate the reality that women's membership in the upper echelons of management tends to be disproportionate compared to that of men; in 2011 only 16.1% of Fortune 500 leadership positions were filled by women (Catalyst, 2011). And when women do make it into positions of authority they are much more likely to accept leadership positions that are associated with a higher risk for failure (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

Positions that are associated with higher risk of failure have been called “glass cliff positions.” The term applies to any member of a marginalized group who is placed in a leadership position that comes in the midst of problematic organizational circumstances, which

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translates to a greater risk of failure for the new leader (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Many of the presumed causes of the glass cliff phenomenon tend to arise from more informal or implicit aspects of the workplace, rather than from clear-cut policies or explicit rules. Examples include a lack of support and networking opportunities for female leaders, less information sharing, and the unavailability of spontaneous mentoring relationships. Members of most marginalized groups tend to feel excluded from important organizational networks, making them feel alienated and as though they do not belong. Socialization processes condition even well-intentioned individuals to have sexist biases and beliefs. When these biases are acted on in brief and unassuming ways, they constitute micro-aggressions, a more subtle and ambiguous form of sexism than most people are familiar with.

Sue and colleagues define micro-aggressions as “brief and commonplace daily verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological consequences on the target person or group (Sue & Sue, 2008, p. 273).” By that standard, the lack of women in high-status positions in organizations is, in and of itself, an environmental micro-aggression. Micro-aggressions are often delivered environmentally through the physical surroundings, making the target group or person feel unwelcome, isolated, unsafe, or alienated. In the workplace, these types of micro-aggressions are often perpetrated without conscious awareness and are more likely to happen when individuals pretend not to notice differences in people, thereby denying that gender had anything to do with the micro-aggression and discounting the alienation and lack of support felt by the victim. For example, when a manager in an organization consistently gives more work responsibility to males within the organization, it conveys the unspoken message that men are more capable than women.

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Similarly, when an assertive woman in the workplace is labeled “a bitch,” the implicit message is that women should be passive. When a female manager is promoted and finds herself in an environment dominated by men, it sends the message that “women don’t belong here” and that she is an exception to the rule. Even though micro-aggressions tend to be unintentional and unconscious, they present a very real barrier to the psychological wellbeing of females and an obstacle to ensuring fair workplace standards.

Members of marginalized groups often experience detrimental personal effects as a result of micro-aggressions, which are far more common than the more traditionally conceptualized egregious discriminatory acts perpetrated by individuals with blatantly sexist beliefs (Deitch, Barsky, Butz, Chan, Brief, & Bradley, 2003). Because encounters with discrimination are stressful, they ultimately tax an individual’s adaptive resources, impede access to opportunities, and negatively affect interpersonal relations. These interactions can eventually result in heightened psychological and physiological stress reactions (e.g., anxiety and anger, heightened blood pressure). Adverse effects on indicators of wellbeing for marginalized groups include decreases in self-esteem, emotional wellbeing, and physical wellbeing. Reported consequences of micro-aggressions for members of marginalized groups also include feelings of powerlessness, invisibility, and loss of integrity (Sue, 2010). Some research points to the idea that ambiguous discrimination in the workplace may actually be more stressful to a victim than negative treatment that is clearly a result of overt prejudice. In a study by Schneider, Hitlan, and Radhakrishnan (2000), individuals of color who experienced exclusion based on their ethnicity (e.g., being excluded from work-related or social interactions due to race) displayed more negative personal and organizational outcomes than individuals who experienced both exclusion and verbal harassment, such as derogatory comments or slurs. In the first case (exclusion only),

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individuals could not be certain that their mistreatment was the result of the perpetrator's prejudiced beliefs or whether it was due to some other factor. While this study was not examining the effects of micro-aggressions on women in particular, because micro-aggressions in the workplace tend to be subtle and ambiguous, they likely present a more significant stressor than overtly discriminatory behavior for all victimized groups. Victims of micro-aggressions in the workplace have to not only question their perpetrators, but themselves as well (e.g., wondering if they misread what happened or if they are being overly mistrustful). Discrimination in the workplace has also been linked to lower organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Deitch et al., 2003), creating a greater risk that members of stigmatized groups will leave the organization. This could result in both negative impacts on individuals and organizations (e.g., loss of work for the individual and costly turnover for the organization).

Of course, micro-aggressions are not the only form of discrimination in the workplace. Studies have shown that 94% of women have reported experiencing sexual harassment, 92% reported disrespect because of their gender, and 87% experienced sexism from strangers (Sue & Sue, 2008). "Everyday" sexist remarks and behaviors (e.g., sexist language, gender-role stereotyping, and objectifying comments) have been shown to lead to negative outcomes such as feelings of anger, anxiety, and depression in women (Sue et al., 2007). While addressing overt sexism and sexual harassment is outside the scope of this project, it is important to realize that both men and women continue to assert that women have gained equality in the workplace and no longer face discrimination based on sex. Yet the very fact that perpetrators tend to deny the existence of micro-aggressions because they are so subtle only compounds the already negative effects.

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Sex-role expectations and an increased sense of pressure to represent women in general create more barriers to women attempting to take on a new leadership role within organizations. However, knowledge about what makes a successful leader is not always innate. Women who struggle to find a balance between their identities as women and their identity as a manager can have a particularly difficult time due to prescribed gender stereotypes. The perceived incongruity between the traditional female gender role and a leadership role tends to create a bias toward female leaders. This bias takes the form of either (1) a less favorable evaluation of women's overall image because leadership ability is more stereotypically masculine and thus in conflict with the female gender role or (2) a less favorable evaluation of women's actual leadership behavior because directive, leader-like behavior is perceived as a violation of the female gender role (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003). Thus, violations of either the female stereotype or the leader stereotype have a negative impact on the evaluation of a leader if she is female. It appears that the additional stress that women face as a result of being a member of a marginalized group in the workplace can leave female workers exhausted, burned out, and disillusioned. Because glass cliff positions are characterized by a lack of support from colleagues and superiors, inadequate information, and insufficient time and resources, they can lead to stress and have negative consequences not only for women's psychological wellbeing, but also for their future career aspirations. When women leave the workplace, it harms not only the individual, but also the organization at large as it perpetuates the message that women do not belong in positions of leadership.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research relevant to the topic of leadership and women is currently scattered across a variety of fields, including education, business, and psychology, making it difficult to develop an overarching outline. The comprehensive framework that follows is a consolidation of the current research and will provide a better understanding of women's experiences in the work environment, and the cultural and organizational barriers that affect women's advancement into leadership positions. A review of what has been done in terms of leadership program development focused on women specifically will also be included as well as identification of the areas relevant to women's unique leadership developmental needs.

Gender biases, differential evaluation, and gender tokenism in the workplace

Every day, individuals in America are bombarded with images of men and women. Some of these images are good and help promote a healthy self-image and perceptions of others. Other images, particularly in the popular media, advertisements for cosmetics, clothes, cars, and other material goods, are psychologically harmful to both males and females. The 2011 documentary, *Miss Representation* (Siebel, 2011) shows how exposure to unrealistic images are meant to exploit feelings of insecurity and anxiety and sell products as they portray women as objects, create ideals of unattainable perfection, denigrate women in power, and keep women and girls out of leadership roles. Hypersexualized images in the media lead to the idea that a woman's power comes from her physical attractiveness, and that women must be natural enemies since there is a constant competition to be as attractive as or more attractive than other women. By interweaving narratives of teenage girls with interviews with leaders like Condoleezza Rice, Lisa Ling, Nancy Pelosi, Katie Couric, Gloria Steinem, and others, this film illuminates the notion

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that the mainstream media has not provided young women with positive role models, creating a psychological barrier to women perceiving themselves as leaders. From the time girls are old enough to watch TV, they are being exposed to biases against women. Exposure to the media's portrayal of women encourages girls to objectify themselves and accept that they will be objectified by others, which in turn can lead to greater anxiety, depression, lower confidence, lower ambition, and even lower cognitive functioning (Green, Read, & Davids, 2012). The narrator suggests that the more power women gain, the greater the backlash from the media. For example, both Sarah Palin and Hillary Clinton were described in the media with terms like "ditz" and "bitch," terms that lead viewers to focus on things like their physical appearance, trivialize them, and make them seem less powerful. The film presents the disheartening statistic that in U.S. history, there have only been 34 female governors, compared to 2319 male governors. This powerful film concludes that the messages that are being sent to women through the media are not only harmful to females, but to males as well. Women bring different ways of conceptualizing problems and goals to the table, and keeping gender biases alive in the workplace harms the larger goals and objectives of all organizations.

Both conscious and unconscious biases against women in leadership roles present barriers to women who wish to move up the proverbial ladder. One of the earliest studies aimed at gaining insight into the stereotypes of men as managers and the implicit associations between these stereotypes was conducted by using a descriptive index that consisted of 92 adjectives (e.g., intelligent, emotionally stable, objective) (Schein, 1973). This index was presented to male middle manager study participants. Participants were asked to indicate how characteristic each term was of either (1) women in general, (2) men in general, or (3) successful middle managers in general. They found that participants believed that men were more likely than women to possess

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the characteristics associated with managerial success, with about 65% (60) of the adjectives seen as characteristic of both men and of good managers. In contrast, only eight characteristics (8.69%) were thought to be shared by both good managers and women. The results were replicated in a follow-up study with female middle managers (Schein, 1975), indicating that female gender stereotypes are internalized by women as well. This study resulted in the coining of the phrase, “think-manager-think-male.” Twenty-one years later, a similar study was conducted in Japan and China with virtually the same results – males and females in both countries perceived that successful middle managers possess characteristics and attitudes more commonly associated with men than with women (Schein, 1996). The results have been replicated in studies in the U.S., Great Britain, and Germany using the same Schein 92-item Descriptive Index, indicating that “think-manager-think-male” is a global phenomenon that persists even in a modern work environment (Schein, 1973; Schein, Mueller, & Jacobson, 1989; Schein & Mueller, 1992).

Due in part to the “think manager, think male” mentality, women continue to be underrepresented in positions of leadership in many organizations, leading to a gender-token scenario whereby women who are numerically scarce in positions of leadership feel particular pressure to prove themselves as individuals and also to be representations of their sex in general. In a study aimed at better understanding how stress is associated with gender-tokenism in female leadership, McDonald, Toussaint, and Schweiger (2004) examined female leaders’ expectations when working in male-dominated groups. They believed that much of the stress experienced by token-female leaders is related to the lower social status of females in general. Gender-tokenism refers to individuals who are numerically scarce within an organization based upon gender. To better understand the degree to which gender tokenism and social status contributes to negative

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experiences by women, the researchers designed a study in which college-level female participants were told they would be acting as group leaders in one of three conditions: non-token, gender-token, or high status gender token. In the non-token condition, female participants were told they would be leading a group of all female members. In the gender-token condition, participants were told they would be leading a group of all males who were equivalent in age and education level to the participant. Finally, in the high-status gender token condition participants were to lead a group of all-male members who were 4-9 years younger than the leader.

After being given the profiles of six fictional group members, participants were given leader expectation questionnaires aimed at measuring (1) performance pressure, (2) anxiety, (3) comfort level, (4) confidence, (5) effectiveness, (6) desire to change groups, (7) a participant's desire to change the gender make-up of her group, (8) expectations of being stereotyped, (9) stereotyping others, and (10) standing out. Results showed that participants in the gender-token condition reported more performance pressure and anxiety and scored lower on measures of confidence, comfort, and effectiveness than participants who were assigned to the non-token and high-status gender token groups. The researchers concluded that increasing the social status of women leaders through organizational interventions could minimize negative expectations of gender-token leaders. However, merely placing women in leadership positions, they argued, does not necessarily increase the social status of women because gender-token leaders in this study did not appear to feel empowered by their position in terms of feeling more self-confident or secure.

Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) conducted a meta-analysis of 61 Goldberg-paradigm experiments to determine whether women tend to be evaluated less favorably than men when performing leadership and managerial behaviors, even though objectively their behaviors

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are equivalent. The reader may be familiar with Goldberg's (1968) paradigm experiments, which are so named after the researcher who first used identical articles that were ostensibly written by a woman or a man to test for biases against women. In these experiments, the described characteristics of the leaders other than gender were held constant. Results of the meta-analysis indicated that women in leadership positions were devalued more strongly, relative to males, when leadership behaviors were carried out in a stereotypically masculine style (autocratic or directive). Additionally, the devaluation of women was greater when female leaders were placed in male-dominated roles (e.g., as athletic coaches and in business/manufacturing settings) and when the evaluators were men. They posited that when female leaders violated their prescribed gender roles by using a more directive, masculine style they were perceived less favorably. They found that women were perceived as significantly more task-oriented than men for equivalent behaviors, which may reflect a tendency for raters to contrast female's leadership behavior with the female stereotype and, through that contrast, see task-oriented behavior as more extreme. The researchers reasoned that females in leadership positions face a unique challenge on the basis of their gender. The need to adhere to either a female stereotype or a leader stereotype creates a double bind for women. If female leaders conform to the female stereotype, they are not judged to be suitable leaders, but if they conform to the leader stereotype they are not viewed as being feminine enough. Thus, violations of either stereotype appear to have a negative impact on the evaluation of a female leader.

In another meta-analysis on gender evaluation in leaders, Cuadrado, Morales, Recia, and Howard (2008) produced similar findings. In an experiment with a 2 x 2 design, the researchers examined whether the scarce representation of females in managerial roles is related to women leaders tending to manage in a stereotypically masculine way, thereby stepping outside their

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prescribed gender roles and subsequently being evaluated more negatively than their male peers. They provided fictional scenarios involving both male and female leaders and asked participants to rate the favorability of leadership style. Results indicated that a stereotypically female leadership style was evaluated by raters more favorably regardless of the leader's gender. More specifically, regardless of sex, all leaders were considered more competent and efficient, and were evaluated more favorably, when they adopted stereotypically feminine leadership styles. The researchers found that female leaders obtained poorer evaluations when they adopted male-stereotypical leadership, rather than having a stereotypically female leadership style. Interestingly, males were not evaluated less favorably when they adopted a female-typical leadership style; they were actually evaluated more positively. The researchers discussed the possibility that changes that have occurred since performing the Eagly et al. (1992) meta-analysis (the average year of publication being 1980) could be a key factor in these findings. In 1980, only 26.2% of all managers and administrators were women, but by 2011 that number had grown to 51.4% (Catalyst, 2012). They argue that the increase in female managers since the 1980s and the accompanying changes in theories and practices of leadership have led to the notion of the "female leadership advantage." This refers to the hypothesis that stereotypically feminine leadership styles are advantageous for women because they are consistent with current organizational demands (e.g., transformational leadership style). However, it is unclear if this shift really gives female leaders an advantage in the workplace, especially when compared to the huge barriers already in place for female leaders. It appears that whereas men do not face more negative evaluation if they deviate from styles that are incongruent with their gender (using feminine leadership styles), female leaders continue to receive unfavorable evaluations when they add masculine behaviors to their feminine repertoires. Leadership among men may be

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perceived as legitimate regardless of the leadership style they employ, whereas women must work harder and employ socially sanctioned methods of leadership to be accepted.

Another study examined the process of leadership development in women with regard to unconscious, or second-generation gender bias (Ely, Insead, & Kolb, 2011). The research provided the basis for subsequent recommendations to both individual leaders and organizations seeking to increase the numbers of talented women leaders within their ranks. The researchers offered a framework for women's leadership development that was grounded in theories of both gender and leadership. They argue that gender biases can manifest in the workplace in several ways: through too few role models for women, through organizational practices that fail to take women's lives into account, through too few networking opportunities, and through excessive performance pressure placed on women leaders. They identified impediments to women leader's identity development, particularly gender role conflicts inherent in women taking on traditionally male roles. The conflicts created between women taking on roles that are not in line with their socially constructed gender roles tend to cause a trade-off between women's ability to be perceived as competent and their ability to be liked by others.

Ely, Insead, and Kolb (2011) also discussed other barriers to women being successful in leadership positions, including women's lack of access to networks and sponsors, heightened visibility due to underrepresentation in the upper echelons of management, and unintentional or unconscious gender biases also known as second generation gender bias. Second-generation gender biases are so called because they do not require an intent to exclude, nor do they appear to produce direct harm to any individual. Instead, second generation gender biases are embedded in stereotypes and organizational practices and are often hard to detect. Similar to the pervasive nature of racial biases, gender biases can be carried unconsciously by managers, workers, and

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senior leaders despite the fact that they may consciously and verbally denounce gender discrimination of any kind and be supportive of gender equality in the work place. The authors argue that most leadership programs place the burden on women to overcome systems that inherently favor men, often leading them to believe that they need to be more aggressive and dedicated if they want to succeed. These messages convince women that if they do manage to succeed, they are the exceptions to the rule; if they experience setbacks, they are the ones to blame for not being sufficiently aggressive, ambitious, or fully committed to their jobs.

Over the past decade, language attempting to describe women's career paths including "opting out," "off ramps," "mommy track," and a myriad of others, have developed and helped solidify the notion that women have to choose being successful in stable, full time careers or becoming good wives and mothers. Women who are described with the above terms are seen as not competing at work so they can focus on their families or have lowered ambitions that make them unsuitable for positions of organizational leadership. Shapiro, Ingols, and Blake-Beard (2008) describe pejorative terms like these as indicative of a culture of career double binds for women, which are exacerbated by persistent socialized gender schemas. These fallacies continue to exist despite the fact that about 70% of women in the workplace also have children (Siebel, 2011). These authors describe gender double binds as "contradictory frames or injunctions that signify neither traditional feminine behavior nor masculine behavior will be rewarded, and often these behaviors are penalized" (p. 311). Women who choose to work part time or take time off to care for family members are seen as deficient, invalid, and wrong in terms of career advancement. Yet women who decide that they want to focus primarily on their careers face questions about their role as women and mothers. Whichever path they choose, women tend to face negative perceptions. Gender biases that follow these negative perceptions of women in the

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workplace can impact women's ability to be promoted, to take on highly visible assignments, to gain additional training, and to show that they are capable of becoming successful leaders.

One example of how second-generation gender bias can impact the process of leader development is with the 360-degree assessment, a key component of many leadership development programs. The 360-degree feedback model provides invaluable information to a leader about how he or she is perceived by others and includes feedback from supervisors, peers, and subordinates on behaviors that are effective and behaviors and attitudes that are detrimental to their ability to lead effectively (Ely, Insead, & Kolb, 2012). Receiving this kind of comprehensive feedback is crucial to the development of female leaders because it allows women to receive more candid feedback from bosses than is generally given. It also presents a way for women to begin a dialogue with superiors about work they may be doing of which their bosses may be unaware.

However, women may receive contradictory feedback from assessments due to second generation gender bias and have difficulty knowing how to incorporate that feedback (Ely et al., 2011). For example, a woman may receive feedback advising her to "be tougher and hold people accountable," but also to "not set expectations too high" (p. 481). Mentors, coaches, and formal training programs that enable women to interpret these types of feedback in the context of double binds can help leaders make sense of the feedback and feel more equipped to manage their behavior in response. Additional aspects of leadership development that are especially important for women are creating networking opportunities, engaging in negotiation, and leading change. The authors note that for some women, networking can seem inauthentic as though they are deliberately using people as means to an end rather than building relationships based on authenticity and trust. Acknowledging these feelings and finding ways to overcome them are

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necessary steps in helping women become leaders. Acknowledging the presence of second generation gender bias and its potential to impact an assessment of women is one step organizations can take to support their female leaders.

Because leadership assessments and evaluations are based on leadership models that were originally developed for and by men, it is important to give special consideration to how women are evaluated using these tools. In a study that examined the sex-related differences that emerge in the evaluation of leadership, Pratch and Jacobwitz (1996) evaluated peer ratings of leadership at the end of a nine-week intensive leadership development program for men and women. They also evaluated motivation and coping strategies for dealing with stress among participants. The setting allowed participants to advance themselves within the group, and role relationships and responsibilities within this group were inherently ambiguous. Constructive coping strategies were evaluated by assessing group members with the Shanan Sentence Completion Technique, which is a measure constructed to assess a respondent's capacity to deal with stress. The measure itself serves as a stressful situation, forcing respondents to make decisions about what to say and commit themselves to a response. Responses are scored based on whether the respondent indicates an active or passive coping style with regard to the self and the environment.

The results of the evaluations of leaders within the program showed that men displayed significantly higher levels of agentic-instrumental tendencies while women showed higher level of communal-social qualities, which were in turn correlated with evaluations of leadership. Agentic qualities included being dominant, director, achiever, aggressive, and self-promoting. Women who exhibited strong agentic-instrumental tendencies were evaluated as less effective leaders than women who exhibited communal qualities. However, men suffered no negative perception of their leadership abilities if they exhibited communal tendencies. This double

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standard inherent in the differential evaluation of men and women indicates that male leadership is automatically perceived as legitimate, so whether they exhibit traditionally male qualities is less relevant to their perceived effectiveness. Women, on the other hand, necessarily have to work to prove their legitimacy as leaders, and so they have to actively balance their internal needs and morals with environmental demands and constraints. Again, this phenomenon puts the responsibility on women to overcome male-dominated environments, requiring women who wish to be seen as effective leaders to disprove or overcome a negative bias rooted in the belief that the attributes associated with the female gender role are discordant with those associated with being a leader. The researchers' examination of the coping styles and motivations of effective leaders with regard to perceived leader effectiveness showed that evaluations for women, but not men, were significantly and positively correlated with their scores on the SSCT, indicating that women leaders are likely to be evaluated by additional criteria that are not used to evaluate men. Such criteria likely include how women leaders cope with stressful situations. Specifically, the women who were perceived as being most effective were those who coped with stress by focusing on externalized tasks. Again, this may indicate that whereas men's leadership is automatically perceived as legitimate, women must display exceptional competence and abilities to be seen as effective leaders. Furthermore, the results of this study may show that female leaders are expected to exhibit higher levels of both the interpersonally oriented and the task-oriented aspects of leadership.

More recent research adds credibility to the idea that males who utilize traditionally female leadership styles and are more androgynous in their leadership profiles are becoming more desirable to organizations. Violanti and Jurczak (2011) conducted a quantitative study to examine communication styles and their relationship to perceived leadership abilities within the

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theoretical frame of role expectation. Their sample included employees in various organizations who had been employed for at least five years. Their participants, the majority of whom identified as White, between the ages of 42-60, and as “white-collar,” were given an internet-based survey consisting of a measure of participant sex-role attitudes, a brief description of a leader, and a 20-item rating scale. The researchers hypothesized that “masculine” typical communication would be preferred in situations that required task focus while “feminine communication” would be preferred in situations that required a relationship focus. However, their results indicated that a feminine communication style was preferred in all scenarios. Suggested reasoning for these findings included the idea that women using a feminine communication style were rated more positively due to the expected use of non-verbal reinforcement behaviors because women have been socialized to use more positive non-verbal reinforcers to downplay directness. Another explanation they suggested was that women may be automatically perceived as other-centered, even if they use a masculine communication style due to gender stereotyping. A limitation of this study was the homogenous nature of the sample (predominately white, upper-middle-class men). However, I believe that the results of the study reflect an actual change in the desirability of feminine traits within leaders, both male and female. There appears to have been an increase in organizational demand for leaders who are interpersonally oriented, democratic, and who give individualized consideration regardless of their sex, all hallmarks of a transformational leadership style.

Burns (1978) used the term “transformational leadership” to describe a leadership style in which leaders motivate followers to do more than they originally intended to do by presenting them with a vision and motivating them to transcend their own motivations for the greater good. Transformational leaders offer emotional support and connection to followers, which enhance

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their level of motivation and perception of the morality of the leader. This is contrasted with transactional leadership, which focuses on the exchange of rewards and sanctions for compliance with stated performance objectives of employees. Some amount of both transactional and transformational leadership styles is necessary in good managers. Transactional behaviors are needed to ensure that employees are meeting their required performance standards, while transformational leadership qualities are necessary to encourage organizational commitment and internalized motivation from employees.

According to Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003) transformational leadership style is comprised of four components: idealized influence (e.g., leaders have a high standard of moral and ethical conduct and are admired, respected, and trusted), inspirational motivation (e.g., leaders have a strong vision and generate enthusiasm and confidence from followers), intellectual stimulation (e.g., leaders encourage divergent thinking from followers, challenge norms, and push employees to come up with innovative strategies; new ideas for creative solutions to problems are encouraged without fear of public criticism of individuals' mistakes), and individualized consideration (e.g., leaders recognize the unique growth and individual needs of their followers and focus on helping individuals reach their full potential). This is contrasted with a transactional leadership style, which involves followers agreeing with, accepting, or complying with the leader in exchange for rewards (praise, resources, or money) or to avoid disciplinary action. Transformational leadership tends to enhance followers' feelings of organizational cohesiveness, potential, commitment, and performance. Some studies have shown that there is a connection between transformational leadership traits and feminine traits, and that women tend to exhibit more transformational leadership behaviors than their male counterparts, who have tended to favor a more transactional leadership style.

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Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Van Engen (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 45 studies on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles to examine whether women's typical leadership styles differ from, or are the same as, men's typical leadership styles. They were also interested in determining whether these differences would present barriers or be assets to women who sought higher organizational leadership positions. They found that female leaders tended to exhibit more transformational leadership behavior and men tended to exhibit a more transactional leadership style. In their article, the authors assert that the public generally frames its expectations about male and female leadership styles in terms of the social role theory, which implies that leaders occupy roles that are defined by a position in a hierarchy. They then concurrently function under the limits of their gender roles. The perceived incongruity between the traditional female gender role and a leadership role creates a bias toward female leaders. Thus, a transformational leadership style may be more common among female leaders because it is an adaptive adjustment to the circumstances; it is perceived as more communal and, therefore more widely accepted leadership style for women, because it is in line with female gender roles.

The “Glass Cliff” Effect

One possible explanation as to why there are not more females in leadership positions given the fact that feminine leadership traits are now more desirable among organizations is due to the “glass cliff effect” (Ryan & Haslam, 2005), or the idea that women's leadership positions are more precarious than those of males and are therefore less desirable because they come with greater risk. An example of the scrutiny to which women leaders are regularly exposed comes from an article in *The Times* (Judge, 2003) entitled “Women on the Board: Help or Hindrance?” The author argued that women have had a negative impact on company performance among companies listed on the London Stock Exchange, exclaiming,

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So much for smashing the glass ceiling and using their unique skills to enhance the performance of Britain's biggest companies. The triumphant march of women into the country's boardrooms has instead wreaked havoc on companies' performance and share prices (Judge, 2003, p. 21).

More recently in U.S. news, JP Morgan Chase's CIO, Ina Drew, was the first person on the board to take the blame for the bank's gigantic \$2 billion loss on risky trades in May of 2012 (Covert, 2012). According to a recent article entitled "Was JP Morgan Chase's CIO Ina Drew Pushed off the Glass Cliff," Drew was in charge of the division that was responsible for making the catastrophic trade. When the bad investment resulted in a huge loss for the company, she was the first to lose her position on the board. She was reportedly known as one of the top women on Wall Street, but even the influence she had gained with that title was not enough to protect her position. Rather than choosing to replace Drew with another female executive, the board decided to replace her with two men. The author of the article posits that women are being promoted within big banking firms like Chase to satisfy a need for diversity pushed on them by external forces, but when things go wrong the women in power positions are the first to get the blame.

In an effort to create a more objective evaluation of women in leadership performance that takes into account situational factors such as the time of appointment and fluctuations in company performance, Ryan and Haslam (2005) conducted an archival study on the share price performance of 100 companies on the London Stock Exchange both immediately before and immediately after the appointment of male and female board members. The performance of companies was calculated as the percentage movement in share price from December 17, 2002 to December 17, 2003. Results indicated that companies that appointed a male board member

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showed relatively stable performance over time, whereas company performance varied significantly over time as a function of time of appointment for those companies that appointed a female board member. More specifically, in a time of general financial downturn in the stock market, companies that appointed a female board member had experienced consistently poor performance in the months leading up to the appointment. Thus, women were more likely than men to be offered and accept positions already associated with poor company performance. In this way, women are placed on a “glass cliff,” in the sense that the leadership opportunities for them often come in the midst of problematic organizational circumstances, and are therefore more precarious. These researchers posit that the glass cliff could be a result of increased awareness of the glass ceiling effect. While the glass ceiling continues to be a barrier to women in the workplace, the glass cliff presents an entirely new hurdle.

To supplement their archival research, Ryan and Haslam conducted a series of experimental studies to establish the veracity of the glass cliff phenomenon (Ryan & Haslam, 2005; Ryan & Haslam 2006). In each study, participants were provided with details of a vacancy for a leadership position in the context of good or poor organizational performance. They were given descriptions of three candidates for the position, including a female and a male candidate who were equally qualified and a third male candidate who was clearly not suitable for the job. Participants consistently judged the female candidate to be more suitable for appointment when organizational performance was declining. The glass cliff patterns were found for scenarios that included a financial director (Ryan & Haslam, 2006), a youth representative for a music festival (Ryan & Haslam, 2006), and a candidate for a hard-to-win political constituency (Ryan, Haslam, & Kulich, 2010).

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Possible reasons why female leaders seem to be favored in times of crisis or hardship are discussed in another article by Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, and Bongiorno (2010). The authors wanted to find a causal relationship between leadership preferences and situational context and to explain the existence of the glass cliff effect. In a series of three studies, the researchers examined gender and managerial stereotypes in the context of companies that were doing well or doing poorly. They examined the perceived incompatibility between what it means to be a good manager and what it means to be female, also known as the “think-manager-think-male” association (Schein, 1973), since this association has been identified as one of the key barriers to female leaders rising to positions of greater power within a company. They hypothesized that with the increase in the popularity of transformational leadership there seems to have been an acceptance of the effectiveness of traditionally female traits, particularly when it comes to crisis situations. Because there appears to be evidence that what is needed in a leader in a crisis situation is different from what is needed in a leader under normal circumstances, the researchers hypothesized that in times of organizational crisis, those who are responsible for appointing leaders do not automatically think-manager-think-male, but are more likely to make the association think-crisis-think-female (Ryan et al., 2010).

Using an internet-based survey, participants in this study were asked to rate 92 traits in terms of how desirable each was for either a manager of a successful company or a manager of an unsuccessful company on a 5-point Likert scale (Ryan et al., 2010). They found that about an equal number of stereotypically masculine and stereotypically feminine traits were desirable for managers of successful companies (8 and 9 traits, respectively), but when they examined the desirable attributes for managers of unsuccessful companies they found a very different pattern. Here they found that only six traits (including decisive and assertive) were seen to be

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stereotypically masculine whereas 11 were seen to be stereotypically feminine (including tactful, modest, and sympathetic). The findings indicated that under certain circumstances of poor company performance, people tended to find stereotypically feminine traits more desirable than masculine traits and to think-crisis-think-female.

As a follow up, the same researchers conducted a study to explain why feminine traits were seen as more desirable for managers of poorly performing companies (Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, & Bongiorno, 2010). They hypothesized that men and women could be seen as more or less suitable for leadership positions in times of poor company performance depending upon what is required of that leader (e.g., managing people, being a spokesperson, taking responsibility, or enduring the crisis). Using the same online investigation method as in the previous study, they surveyed 147 participants who had had any kind of work experience. Participants were randomly given one of five versions of a questionnaire describing a fictitious international company that was interested in hiring a senior manager to take over a poorly performing division of a company. They then received one of five descriptions of what the manager would be required to do. Options were: (1) stay in the background and endure the period of poor performance, (2) take responsibility for the failure of the division, (3) manage personnel through the crisis, (4) be a spokesperson for damage control, or (5) take control of the division in an effort to improve it. Participants were then asked to rank 12 traits in terms of how desirable they would be for the new manager, which included six stereotypically masculine traits and six stereotypically feminine traits chosen on the basis of the previous study (for men the traits were related to strength, dominance, insensitivity, and ambition. For women they were related to warmth, interdependence, weakness, and physical appearance). They found a significant interaction between managerial role and traits, such that feminine traits were more

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desirable than masculine traits when the manager was required to stay in the background and endure, take responsibility for the poor performance, or manage people through the crisis. There was no significant difference in the desirability of masculine and feminine traits when the manager was required to be a spokesperson or improve company performance, both active roles.

Based on these results, Ryan et al. (2010) concluded that when the manager was required to take on a relatively passive role by enduring the crisis or being a scapegoat, there was a clear preference for feminine traits (one can see the evidence of this in the case of Ina Drew). Thus, it appears to be important to reflect closely on both the nature of leadership roles that females undertake as well as the circumstances under which they accept a leadership position. Multiple causes of the glass cliff have been explored (Ryan, Haslam, Wilson-Kovacs, Hersby, & Kulich, 2007). Indicators point to the idea that poorly performing companies and lack of support are key contributors to glass cliff positions. Other factors include being a member of a marginalized group, a lack of support, and lack of information and resources that individuals in a place of privilege have. The glass cliff is present when individuals from a marginalized group are put in leadership positions. This applies to women and to members of other marginalized groups including differing ethnic or religious backgrounds, sexual orientation, and other aspects of diversity.

Gender, Stress, and Organizational Exit

Some research has suggested that women's differential experiences in the workplace, getting appointed to glass cliff positions in particular, lead to more work-related stress in women than in males. The lack of support and consideration lead women to question their attachment to their organizations and eventually exit the workplace. This phenomenon is referred to as the

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gender-stress-dis-identification (GSD) model (Ryan et al., 2007). Figure 1 shows this model, which depicts how increased stress for female leaders related to the glass cliff effect leads to reduced organizational identification and eventual exit from the organization. Some organizational leaders continue to believe that women represent a 'poor investment' because they are expected to leave the organization to have or care for children. When female leaders do leave organizations as a result of increased workplace stress and low perceived organizational support, the notion that they were a bad investment in the first place appears to be confirmed. This could create a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy for organizations that can prove to be detrimental for workers as well as for the organization itself. In reality, subtle forms of gender discrimination are often key reasons as to why women leave organizations or their careers stagnate. In his review of stress research, sociologist Leonard Perlin (1989) speaks to this phenomenon, stating,

Many stressful experiences, it should be recognized, don't spring out of a vacuum but typically can be traced back to surrounding social structures and people's locations within them. The most encompassing of these structures are the various systems of stratification that cut across societies, such as those based on social and economic class, race and ethnicity, gender, and age ... The structural contexts of peoples' lives are not extraneous to the stress process but are fundamental to that process. They are the sources of hardship and privilege, threat and security, conflict and harmony. In searching for the origins of stress, we may begin fruitfully by scrutinizing the social arrangements of society and the structuring of experiences within these arrangements (p. 242).

Figure 1. The Gender-Stress Dis-identification Model



By (Ryan, M. K., Haslam, S. A., Wilson-Kovacs, M. D., Hersby, M. D., & Kulich, C., 2007)
Managing diversity and the glass cliff: Avoiding the dangers by knowing the issues. Copyright 2007
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Other factors that can influence women's ability to be productive at work include being able to balance work with aspects of home life like childcare and housework, which can cause a sense of role overload for women. The research indicates that women generally continue to perform primary care giving to children and dependents even while they juggle the demands of their careers. Women often seek to balance their careers with their family responsibilities, sometimes even taking time off of work to spend time with family.

The division of labor in terms of childcare and housework has been contested terrain for married men and women since women began to enter the work force. Women now do less housework than previous generations, but still complete about twice as much as their male counterparts, creating a sense of role-overload for women who both work full time and take care of children (Bianchi et al., 2000). To better understand the extent to which lower social power, lower perceptions of personal control, and role overload relate to greater reports of psychological distress in women than in men, Rosenfeld (1989) conducted a survey of employed women. This author defined role overload for women as a phenomenon characterized by an excessive level of demands in which "women, either in caring for children per se or in combining children with employment, suffer from a greater level of demands than men" (p. 78). Role overload occurs

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primarily in women in part due to the fact that men on average do not increase the amount of household tasks they take on when their female partners are employed, and thus the primary responsibility for work at home, childcare, and employment falls to women. Role overload related to increased demands on women's resources exhausts their supply of time and energy so much so that it makes it difficult for them to meet any one demand fully. The researcher hypothesized that women who were employed full time with children would have a greater level of demands, decreased perceptions of personal control, and thus, a higher level of psychological distress than men. The researcher used a data set comprised of community surveys of mental health and symptoms from three previous studies, which sampled individuals 18 years old and older from various communities throughout the nation. The researcher's hypothesis was supported; the group that was highest in demands also reported the highest number of psychological symptoms. When either job or family demands were low, employed women reported significantly fewer symptoms than women who did not work outside the home, indicating that women seemed to benefit from the greater power and resources associated with employment if family responsibilities were manageable. Rosenfeld also found that when women had high demands in either family or job environments, employment had a negative psychological effect on women. The researcher concluded that when work or family demands are high, it results in a decreased sense of personal control and higher distress level, and that perception of personal control that can come from employment act to mediate stressful life events and chronic stressors when job or family demands are low.

Since the time that the Rosenfeld study was conducted, even more women have entered the workforce and married partners have continued to move towards a more egalitarian split of the housework and child care. More recent research has shown a dramatic increase in the amount

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of housework that men are taking on, yet there is still a significant difference in the amount of housework that men and women do, even when they work full time. For example, between the 1960s and the 1990s, men doubled the amount of time spent on housework, while women have cut their housework time almost in half, yet women still continue to do twice the amount of housework that men do (Bianchi et al., 2000). A heightened sense of investment in household tasks and child care by women may be partly due to ingrained social beliefs that the cleanliness and care of one's home and child is more a reflection of a woman's competence as a wife and mother than of a man's competence as a husband and father. While there has been a generational shift in the amount of housework that each sex believes is fair to complete, the reality is that women continue to take on more housework and childcare than men and it is still very unlikely that most people can realize a perfectly egalitarian split of the labor at home. In a study that explored the relationship between young adults' ideal and expected participation in childcare and household chores, Askari, Liss, Erchull, Staebell, and Axelson (2004) surveyed 358 unmarried, childless men and women regarding the percentage of chores they ideally wished to do and the percentage they actually expected to complete. They hypothesized that women would report a gap between their ideal and expected chore outcomes, which is that they would ideally wish to complete about half of the household chores but would realistically expect to complete more. The hypothesis was supported, and the researchers found that although men desired and expected an equal split in household labor and childcare, women expected to do more than half of the work, which was more than they ideally wished to do. Women reported believing that it was less likely for them to find a partner who would be more family oriented than career oriented. The researchers hypothesized that women's expectations to do more childcare may in part be due to gender socialization and the idea that caretaking is an essential role for women.

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Thus, women who aspire to take on leadership positions will, in all likelihood, still expect to take on more household labor than their male partners. The factors that pull women to take on more responsibilities at home, such as having young children or an incapacitated family member, can be compounded by factors that push women out of the workforce, such as rigid demands on time, under stimulation, and feeling stuck in middle management positions. This compounded pressure results in women who would otherwise be talented leaders leaving their work environments. Thus, flexible work schedules, support for personal priorities, and an increased focus on a culture of keeping women in the workforce is necessary for organizations that aim to develop women employees into successful leaders. The United States is currently the only major industrialized nation that does not require employers to provide paid time off to employees or paid parental leave; in fact, almost one in four Americans does not get paid vacation or holidays (*Miss Representation*, 2012). A more flexible model could put less pressure on women to conform to a “work is primary” career model that demands full time, non-stop employment no matter what.

A recent article in the Harvard Business review, “Off Ramps and On Ramps: Keeping talented women on the road to success,” Hewlett and Luce (2005) described the costs and consequences women face when choosing to take time off from their career to focus on family or other issues. According to this article, approximately one out of three women who hold an MBA is unemployed, compared to one in 20 for men with the same degree. They describe reasons why women leave the workforce in terms of “push” and “pull” factors, with push factors describing elements of the work environment motivating women to leave (e.g., under-stimulation, stress of glass cliff positions, and lack of opportunity for advancement) and pull factors referring to factors like having children or spending time caring for family members who are not children,

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elements that draw them toward spending more time at home. The authors argue that when women feel restricted by rigid policies, glass ceiling, or glass cliff effects at work, they are much more likely to respond to the pull factors of family and leave the workforce. The consequences, however, can be significant in terms of a woman's ability to re-enter the workforce and earn as much as her male peers.

Even relatively short career interruptions come with severe financial penalties. According to the research, the longer women spend out of the workforce, the more severe the penalty. On average, women lost 18% of their earning potential when they took time away from work; specifically, in the business sector that number rises to 28% (Hewett & Luce, 2005). Given the loss in earning potential and their perception of how they are valued by the companies they work for, it may come as no surprise that, for many women, their sense of ambition tends to fall after they have taken time off or worked part time as a strategy to balance work and personal lives. Women's levels of ambition, which are likely already lower than men's due to socialization, media portrayals of women as objects, and women's self-objectification are only damaged further by the loss in earning potential that comes from taking time off of work. The end result is a vicious cycle: as women's professional ambitions come to a standstill, others perceive them as being less committed to the job. When they are perceived as less committed, they don't get the important assignments, they are further under-stimulated, and their ambitions fall even further. The authors concluded that organizations need to think about the costs of losing talented women due to rigid work policies and look at the development of flexible work plans, organizational change, and a focus on the needs of their female professionals as an investment in the bottom line.

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Overall, the research seems to indicate that one of the consequences of the evolution of organizational leader profile demand is the increasing appeal of a transformational leadership style. Male leaders are learning that they should let go of the traditional transactional male style of direction and control and manage in a more stereotypical feminine way because of the positive results that lead to increased group cohesion, organizational citizenship, and organizational commitment. Given that the adoption of a stereotypically feminine leadership style is more congruent with organizational demand, one may wonder why there are not more females in leadership positions. There appears to be no one single answer as to the cause of this phenomenon. A combination of socialization, negative portrayals of powerful women in the media, an ambition gap, and organizational practices all contribute to perpetuate the problem. The idea that masculine traits are necessary to achieve success in managerial positions is pervasive. There appears to be a persistent stereotype that associates managerial activities with stereotypically male qualities present in many cultures including the U.S., Germany, Japan, and China (Schein, 1973; Schein, Mueller, & Jacobson, 1989; Schein & Mueller, 1992). As a result, some women who occupy leadership positions continue to emulate male behavior that is traditionally associated with professional success. Many women who aspire to leadership positions, especially those who are in traditionally male arenas, learn leadership behaviors from successful men. Because female leaders in these areas are not common, the result is a lack of female mentors for future leaders. As Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund stated, "You can't be what you can't see" (Siebel, 2011). When they take their cues from successful male leaders, women in leadership positions sometimes shed their socially desirable feminine behavior in favor of masculine behavior and subsequently break the

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rules of their prescribed gender role. This results in more negative evaluations for females in management roles and can ultimately undercut their impact on those whom they are leading.

Interpersonal influence and processes are not the only ways leaders get employees to contribute to group goals. A recent article in the *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* conceptualized two distinct sets of skills successful leaders have; they frame these skills sets in terms of the interpersonal “how” and the organizational “what.” The how skill set refers to the social influences that leaders use to interpersonally motivate employees to achieve organizational goals, and this view is generally endorsed by those taking a psychological view of leadership. The what skill set, on the other hand, is generally more emphasized by those who are more business-minded and includes leadership functions such as strategy, structure, staffing, and work systems. They suggest that the two perspectives represent complementary skills sets that are both theoretically appreciated, but often not practically implemented together as complementary skill sets to be built upon. To better understand how factors related to the how and what of leadership affect evaluations of overall leadership effectiveness, the researchers sampled 4,670 coworkers of 421 senior managers. Each manager was rated by 11 coworkers, including the manager’s direct supervisor, on several dimensions and sub dimensions of the interpersonal how and organizational what leadership skills. Ratings were obtained with the Leadership Versatility Index 3.0, which contained items measuring forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational dimensions of leader behavior. Construct validity evidence for both the how and what distinctions of leader behavior came from studies concerning the relationship between test validity and personality variables, with forceful/enabling dimensions related to interpersonally oriented traits and strategic/operational dimensions related to task and change oriented traits. Results of the study showed that variables representing both the how and the what of leadership

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contributed equally to evaluations of overall leader effectiveness. (Kaiser, McGinnis, & Overfield, 2012).

The importance of developing both the interpersonal how and the organization what skill sets is particularly relevant when it comes to the selection and development of managers.

Another study suggested that the careful consideration of both of the how or “soft” skill set and the what or “hard” skill set could help improve staffing decisions made by organizational selection committees (Sessa, Taylor, Kaiser, & Campbell, 1998). In response to stories of problem CEO and top-management successions, these researchers conducted a study of 325 executive-level staffing decisions. They found that selection committees were more likely to base hiring decisions on “hard” rather than “soft” factors (examples of hard factors included job experience, industry knowledge, technical skills, and formal education, while soft factors referred to interpersonal skills, communication skills, and teambuilding). The researchers found that success rate of the selected leaders was only 35% when it was based on either only hard factors or only soft factors. When both sets of skills were looked at, the researchers determined the success rate could be brought to as high as 67%. Thus, taking into account the strengths developing leaders have in terms of both interpersonal and strategic operational skills is crucial to developing good leaders.

Developmental Needs of Women

Research has shown that women have different developmental needs than men when it comes to leadership, and so leadership development programs need to be unique and different for women, tailored to meet their specific developmental need. Hopkins, O’Neil, Passarelli, and Bilimoria (2008) examined leadership development practices that focused on the needs of

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women and provided recommendations for consulting psychologists and organizations that wished to advance leadership among women employees. They offered seven areas of development that all leadership programs for women should focus on: assessment, training, coaching, mentoring, networking, experiential learning, and career development. These categories of development require special consideration when used with women leaders. The first category, assessment, is easily prone to gender bias (Pratch & Jacobwitz, 1996). The authors argue that assessment of leadership has a long history of insidious gender biases, and thus, the interpretation of the results of any type of leadership assessment should be done with a special consideration for the gender roles and norms present in the work environment.

The development of a mentorship relationship is one that also needs special consideration for women leaders, as there is a significant lack of positive female role models in most workplaces and particularly in top management, making it important for women to cultivate both male and female mentors. It is important to match high-power mentors with women who have high potential to develop as successful leaders, so that mentees have access to people with decision-making authority and growth opportunities (Hopkins et al., 2008). Networking, as described by Hopkins et al. (2008), is also a problematic system for women to navigate. As many as 46% of women managers feel that they are excluded from informal networks as compared to only 18% of men (Brass, 1985). Even when men and women leaders hold roughly equivalent positions, they move in different social circles, creating a bifurcated network system for women that is separated into social and professional contacts. While men tend to rely on men for both professional and personal relationships, women tend to navigate two separate systems as they associate with women for emotional support and friendship, and with men for instrumental professional assistance. Some women may also tend to see networking relationships as

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inauthentic due to this bifurcation, which can create internal barriers to seeking out networking opportunities as well. Organizations that openly encourage female inclusion in informal networks, especially from top organizational leaders, can help women gain access to mentors who can assist them in understanding the politics of the system, better conceptualize their career trajectory, and increase their self-confidence.

The difficulty many women experience when it comes to entering informal professional networks is summarized in a study that investigated the interaction patterns of men and women in an organization and the relationship of these patterns to their perceived influence and actual rates of promotion (Brass, 1985). The author was interested in investigating why women had not acquired the status and influence of their male counterparts despite increased awareness of barriers to women's advancement like the glass ceiling. The researcher surveyed 140 full time non-supervisory employees and their immediate supervisors regarding the formal and informal networks they belonged to, whether their workgroups were integrated with both genders, and who they considered to be influential in the workplace. Supervisors were also asked to rate employee performance. Results showed that both supervisors and non-supervisors perceived men as significantly more influential than women, and that women received disproportionately fewer promotions than men. The researcher also found that two segregated networks existed within the organization, one comprised of mainly women and one comprised of men. Brass found that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, women were being excluded from the informal networking opportunities within the organization and were subsequently not receiving the same valuable information, resources, and support that comes with inclusion in the high-power male network. Because men had historically been the ones in power, and because women were excluded from these primarily male networks, women were unable to network with the most

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influential people in the organization. Access to the network of highly influential men was significantly and positively correlated with promotions for the entire sample. Women who did manage to gain access to the group of high-level men were rated as significantly more influential. Inclusion in informal networks are thus an important component to address in women's leadership development as they can contribute significantly to a person's ability to make influential contacts, be seen as an effective communicator, and be promoted to senior level positions.

Women's Career Trajectories

Women tend to face a variety of career-life decisions, including taking into account multiple life roles and accepting that an emphasis on one challenge will necessarily result in less time to focus on the other challenges and purposes in one's life. This changes depending upon where a woman is in her career development. One study examined the progression of women's careers and identified three distinct phases that women go through in the early, middle, and end stages of their careers (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). The researchers were interested in examining whether traditional career development models, based predominately on the experiences of men accurately reflect the progression of women's careers, which could develop differently due to different life contexts and responsibilities. The researchers noted that family responsibilities impact women's careers differently, and that women's under representation and token status in the work environment may impact their career trajectories. They examined women's career path processes by looking at the routes that women took and their work-related experiences over their careers, the personal and professional factors involved in career choices, and their belief sets related to their professional work. The authors interviewed 60 women ranging in age from 24-60 in entry, mid-level, and senior positions within their organizations. Most of their participants

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were employed in the private sector, mainly in manufacturing, service organizations, and healthcare. They examined the career stories of women, focusing on times when transitions occurred and career successes, failures, challenges, and opportunities occurred.

From the data, the authors determined that the constructs of career locus, career pattern, context, and beliefs change depending on which of three phases a woman is in her career (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). They named these the idealistic achievement phase, the pragmatic endurance phase, and the re-inventive contribution phase. In the idealistic achievement phase, women generally base their career choices on the desire for career satisfaction, achievement, and success, as well as their desire to positively impact others. Women in this career stage see their future possibilities as nearly limitless and tend to approach their careers and the world from an internal, self-focused perspective. Women in the second phase, the endurance phase, manage multiple responsibilities, both personally and professionally, operating pragmatically, and doing what it takes to get the work done. Women in this phase are most likely to be dissatisfied with their workplaces and may be stalled in middle management positions after having a 10 to 20 year-long career. They may divert their energies from their careers to other areas of life that give them satisfaction, self-worth, and recognition because their careers are not fulfilling by themselves. Women in the final phase, re-inventive contribution, are focused on contributing to their organizations, their families, and their communities. Because they have advanced further in their careers, these women have reclaimed and re-conceptualized their careers as opportunities to contribute to others while maintaining the desire to meet their own personal needs. At each of these three phases, women are focused on different issues of achievement and confidence, work-life balance, and sustaining a perspective on personal and professional contributions.

Current Leadership Development Programs for Women

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One example of a leadership program focused on breaking the glass ceiling in a higher education institution was profiled in the article “The women’s leadership program: A case study” (Berryman-Fink, LeMaster, & Nelson, 2003). The program was designed to address the persistent problem that universities’ organizational leadership, especially law and medical schools, remain largely male dominated. This case study profiled a four-year long women’s leadership organizational intervention at a large Midwestern research university. The program was aimed at increasing the number of women in high-level administrative leadership positions within the university. The program consisted of several distinct elements, including structured learning about administration in the form of workshops, as well as experiential learning in the form of administrative internships. The program was led by a steering committee of 12 women who were formal or informal leaders across campus, including two deans, two vice-provosts, a former director of the university honors program, a retired controller, the chair of the women’s faculty association, and several other visible women leaders on campus. To be eligible for the program, women must have held a rank of associate professor with tenure or have been administrative director with a master’s degree, have had three or more years of experience at the institution, and they must have had some kind of prior administrative experience. The steering committee, which was in charge of the program, made sure that the program was very visible to other individuals on campus, using the campus newspaper to increase coverage of their efforts.

The results of the intervention included positive feedback from both interns in the program and the mentors who supervised their administrative internships. Twenty-one percent of women in the first cohort were promoted to leadership roles, four within the university and one into a corporate leadership position (Berryman-Fink, LeMaster, & Nelson, 2003). Because the pilot program was so successful, an additional three-year budget was provided by the university

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president to continue the program and a full 29.4% of university deanships are now held by women. Two women had become vice provosts at this institution at the time the article was published. While the number of high-level administrative roles held by women was still relatively low following the intervention, the program was perceived as being moderately successful in meeting its original goals. Reasons for its relative success included support from the top (the university president) and widespread coverage of women's issues, which helped women's leadership gain recognition and helped shift the university towards a culture of inclusion and equality.

Much of what has been researched regarding leadership trainings for women has been done in the education sector. The American Council on Education and its Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE) currently provides leadership training and support to women interested in leadership in higher education via state-based volunteer networks and forums. Unfortunately, the evidence of the success of these trainings is mostly anecdotal rather than rigorously evaluated, yet they do present some ideas for consideration regarding leadership development in other professions, businesses, and industries (Baltodano, Carlson, Jackson & Mitchell, 2012). The structure of the OWHE leadership development programs consists of three major initiatives. These initiatives include (1) the American Counsel on Education's state network, (2) Women of Color Summits and leadership training, and (3) national and regional leadership forums. According to the ACE OWHE website, discussion topics that participants in the OWHE's leadership training summits address include (1) strategic planning, budgeting, and fundraising, (2) managing multiple constituencies, (3) leadership styles, (4) crisis management, and (5) career mapping. Activities included in the leadership forums include small group sessions, group resume reviews, and mock interviews. Networking opportunities are also

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available at these forums. Similarly, the national and regional leadership forums are three day sessions during which participants (women seeking a presidency, vice presidency, or deanship) talk about issues ranging from budgeting to communicating with press, to work-life balance. Women aspiring to high-level positions have the added benefit of networking with other professionals and seeking mentors at these forums. It is clear that women need more than information to successfully advance into and retain leadership positions; having a mentor who can empathize with a mentee's struggles, as well as support from the top, appears to be instrumental in the process of creating effective female leaders.

One program that aims to capitalize on providing mentorship to women from other women leaders is the Minute Mentorship Program. Minute Mentoring is a program model developed by Dana Perino, which involves a round-robin style forum where female leaders share their experiences with younger female professionals during rapid-fire small group meetings ("Minute Mentoring," 2013). Comparable to speed dating, small groups of mentees rotate between mentors; which, allows a larger volume of networking and mentoring to take place. Mentees take turns asking questions and mentors, high profile women from a wide range of fields, share their wisdom with young hopefuls. This program started in Washington D.C. and has expanded to other major cities nationwide. As a model that allows for large groups of women to mentor an even larger group of mentees, Minute Mentoring seems a likely answer to the problem that many women face – struggling to find numerically scarce women in positions of leadership who are ready and willing to provide mentorship.

Overall, the research indicates that women who aspire to positions of leadership are put at a disadvantage due to underrepresentation, second-generation gender bias, the glass ceiling, and glass cliff phenomena. They also have unique developmental needs that are not necessarily

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addressed by traditional leadership programs. The present study was developed to investigate what barriers and obstacles women leaders face in their career development, what forms of support they need to be successful, and the organizational factors involved in their success. A qualitative phenomenological research method was used to develop interview questions and conduct semi-structured interviews with eight women leaders in the Portland metro area. Thematic analysis of the interviews and code development were utilized to explore the developmental nature of participants' career experiences and developmental processes. The analyzed data was subsequently used in conjunction with a review of the current literature to develop a leadership program development model for organizations interested in developing women leaders.

METHOD

A qualitative, inductive approach to data collection and analysis was employed, using semi-structured interviewing, thematic analysis, grounded theory, code development, and descriptive statistics (Mason, 2002). The first objective for the analysis was to construct a developmental explanation about how the study participants came to be successful leaders. The analysis focused on how the phenomena and processes that each participant described (e.g., their leadership style, strategies, and support networks) interacted to help her develop her identity as a leader. The arguments the researcher makes implies how and why certain phenomena and processes occurred in each of the participant's lives, but the goal was not to find a clear-cut cause and effect type of explanation in any straightforward fashion. Rather, the analysis was used to help describe a meaningful process of development and the "lived experience" of each participant. Because the process of interviewing individual women allowed attention to the details, complexities, and contexts in each of their experiences, it helped the researcher support predictive ideas about how those factors might vary in different contexts and inform the development of a leadership training program for women.

Participants

A total of eight women who had extensive leadership experience in both for-profit and non-profit sectors were chosen based on purposive sampling, and according to the following inclusion criteria: (1) were fluent in English, (2) lived in the Portland metro area, and (3) had experience supervising or managing others professionally. The participants' ages ranged from 36-62, and the average age of participants was 49.5 years. Seven participants were Caucasian and one participant was African American. Four participants were small business owners and

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chief executive offices who also had prior management experience in different companies. One participant was a regional manager of a local utilities company; another was the founder of a global women's health initiative. Two were high-ranking government officials, one who served as a state official and the other who was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Materials

The only materials used for this study were a series of questions developed specifically for the purposes of the study and guided by the literature about using interviews for qualitative research (Seidman, 2006). All interviewees were asked the same questions; though they were permitted to interpret the questions anyway they chose. The questions were formulated ahead of time and pertained to participants' experiences transitioning into leadership roles, their leadership experiences, early influences, experiences with leadership training models, their experiences with gender bias, support that helped them become successful, role models, challenges, rewards, and how they understood leadership in their own lives. The interview questions can be found in Appendix A of this manuscript. All interviews were recorded for accuracy and transcription purposes.

Procedures

Data were collected between January 2, 2013 and June 30, 2013. In each interview, the participant was the main speaker and the researcher was a listener and facilitator. The participants gave informed consent before interviews began and they were reminded that their participation was voluntary and they would be able to withdraw at any time or decline to answer any questions without negative repercussions. The interviews were audio taped and field notes were recorded. Each interview was coded so that only the researcher would have knowledge of

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the identity of the persons who participated. Participants were informed that results would be kept confidential and pseudonyms were used in transcriptions. The interviewees were asked to take part in three separate interviews; the first took approximately 60 minutes while the second and third took about 30 minutes each. The objective of the second and third interviews was to validate the preliminary analysis of the prior interviews with the participant.

The first interview for each participant was based on the broad question, “What has leadership looked like in your life?” This interview was used to establish rapport and trust with each participant, and also to verify that they would be a good match for the study. The second and third interviews were designed to better understand what support these women had needed to develop as leaders and how they understood leadership in their lives. Moreover, in the second and third interviews, each participant was asked to validate if the statements, words, and ideas reported by the researcher were representative of her experience with leadership.

Analysis

The general research strategy was a qualitative phenomenological strategy. A combination of theory-driven and inductive code development (Mason, 2002) was used to analyze the interview data. Following IRB approval, individual interviews were conducted with local women leaders, during which the researcher inquired about their experiences transitioning into leadership roles, their leadership experiences, early influences, experiences with leadership training models, their experiences with gender bias, support that helped them become successful, role models, challenges, rewards, and how they understood the role of leadership in their lives. Prevalent themes were noted and analyzed from the qualitative data collected from interviews to determine areas important for the development of a leadership program for women transitioning

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for the first time into a managerial position. Descriptive statistics were used to illuminate the frequency with which phenomena occurred in the sample.

Data were initially organized using cross-sectional indexing. This allowed the researcher to apply a uniform set of indexing categories systematically and consistently to the data, using the same lens to explore patterns and themes that occurred across the data. This method of indexing helped provide a systematic overview of the data, and it gave the researcher a clear idea of the coverage and scope of the collected data. Data were coded using a combination of inferential and theory-driven methods. The reasons for cross-sectional indexing; the data were numerous. First, the data were exclusively text-based interview transcripts. Using a cross-sectional indexing system helped the researcher to locate and retrieve themes that did not necessarily appear in an orderly or sequential manner in the text. Cross-sectional indexing also helped the researcher to create interpretive categories and themes, and helped her to conceptualize theoretical thinking.

Each interview was transcribed within one week of the original interview to help ensure accuracy and validity of the data. Once all interviews and transcriptions had been completed, individual phenomena that were deemed significant by the researcher were sorted into one of ten indexing categories. Indexing categories were created to reflect areas of interest and significance based upon previous research. Examples of coded phenomena included behaviors referred to in the text, accounts, attitudes, understandings, and practices. The categories are primarily interpretive, that is they are based upon what the researcher believed she could infer from parts of the data.

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Data were also analyzed by examining individual cases, allowing the researcher to search out particular phenomena in context rather than the common and consistent, and the holistic rather than the cross-sectional. The case studies were meant to be complementary to the cross-sectional indexing because they allowed the researcher to analyze and compare whole cases as opposed to parts and themes cross-sectionally. The researcher started by analyzing each case study to explain the underlying processes that described how a participant came to be in a position of leadership and her understanding of leadership in her life. When using excerpts from interview transcripts, the researcher was very cognizant of the need to protect the identity of participants. Pseudonyms were used for all participants, and when selecting the pseudonyms issues of ethnicity, age, and the contexts of participants' lives were taken into consideration.

The researcher also chose to carefully edit the language when using excerpts from interview transcripts. When transcribing each interview, great care was taken to record every word and utterance. Once the researcher was able to see the transcripts as a whole, she decided to delete from quotations that would be used in the text certain characteristics of oral speech that participants would not have used in writing (e.g., repetitious "ums," and "you knows") and other idiosyncrasies that would not have done the participants justice in a written version of what they had said. This was done thoughtfully with an attempt to balance preserving the realism of participants' speech with maintaining their dignity and to accurately present their oral speech in writing.

RESULTS

All participants described their journey toward becoming leaders in a way that denoted a process of identity formation through relationship building and a commitment to a greater purpose. They also described examples of gender bias or perceived gender role conflict and ways they understood and coped with this bias. Coded data were sorted into ten unique categories, which were then grouped based on interpretive themes. The categories were (1) *comprehensive belief systems*, (2) *early influences and precipitating factors*, (3) *support systems*, (4) *leadership styles*, (5) *mentorship*, (6) *strategies and skill sets*, (7) *rewards of leadership*, (8) *challenges of leadership*, (9) *work-life balance*, and (10) *gender bias*.

The first category, *comprehensive belief systems* included philosophical belief systems (e.g., women can achieve at the same level of success as men if they work hard), assumptions (e.g., having young children slows you down professionally; there is a fundamental difference between managing and leading), normative postulates (a leader always has a mentor), values (e.g., integration and alignment of behaviors, words, and personal values), guiding principles (e.g., the importance of self-confidence, making the best use of what you have been given, focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses) and reported emotions related to leadership (e.g., self-doubt, pride, satisfaction, and frustration).

The second category, *early influences and precipitating factors*, included phenomena such as parental influence (often paternal), the environment (being exposed to inspiring role models; early exposure to office environments via spending time with a working parent), and early leadership experiences (negative reactions to unethical or ineffective leaders; desire to escape emotionally draining management positions). The impact of relationship context on

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women's leadership development was apparent and focused primarily on experiences with negative managers (n = 4, 50%) and positive managers or role models (n = 8, 100%).

The third category created from the coding criteria was *support systems*. This category included formal and informal consultation, stable primary relationships, family members, and people who the researcher has deemed "believers," who were individuals who "believed in" and encouraged participants (usually supervisors, though not always directly in charge of participants, and sometimes friends or even strangers). Out of the eight women I interviewed, seven mentioned having people who believed in their capabilities as leaders before they had taken on their first major leadership role as important factors in their individual development (87.5%). Other phenomena in this category included training (formal and informal) and organizational resources, such as financial resources and staff. Out of the eight participants interviewed, five reported receiving formal leadership training (62.5%), and of those five individuals, four found the training to have been helpful in their career development (80%).

The fourth category codified a participant's *leadership style*. Phenomena classified in this category included behaviors (individual consideration, idealized influence, modeling, eliciting feedback, communication styles, relationship building, and conceptualization of self and others), personality characteristics (authenticity, openness, willingness to learn), tools, and self-described leadership styles (e.g., describing oneself as a servant leader). Individual consideration was described by five of the eight interviewees (62.5%), modeling desired behavior to followers was described by four individuals (50%), eliciting feedback was provided by five women (62.5%), and a description of relationship building behavior was described by eight women (100%). The importance of authenticity or integrity was mentioned by four individuals (50%), being inspirational to one's followers was described by two individuals (25%) and a willingness to

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learn was mentioned by three of the women (37.5%). Two participants used the term “servant leader” to describe themselves (37.5%).

The fifth category included phenomena related to *mentorship*, such as experiences with formal and informal mentors (positive and negative), experiences mentoring others, characteristics of good and bad mentors, and gender. For many participants their most influential mentors were male. All participants interviewed described some kind of mentorship or role model relationship as being important to their development as leaders (100%). Four women participated in formal mentorship programs, in which a mentor or mentee had been assigned to them (50%) and eight women described informal mentors as important to their career development (100%). Two women stated that the most important mentors for them had been male (25%), one reported that her most influential mentor was female (12.5%) and five women cited a combination of both male and female mentors as being equally salient to their professional development (62.5%).

The sixth category codified *strategies and skills sets*, which included behaviors that participants deemed especially helpful to them, such as creating five to ten-year life plans, making lists of priorities (daily and lifetime), learning vicariously through others, and learning to understand people’s individual personalities and communication styles. Two women reported that they utilized a five or ten-year professional development plan (25%), four cited making lists of daily or lifetime priorities (50%), three described observation of others or vicarious learning as important tools they used to get to their current position (37.5%). Two participants mentioned formal assessment measures (e.g., Strengthsfinder®, Meyers-Briggs) as tools they use to better understand the individual differences of their team members (25%).

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The seventh category codified the *rewards of leadership* and what participants described as being some of their biggest motivators to continue in their leadership positions. The most commonly cited reward by all participants was helping others to grow and succeeding as a team ($n = 5$, 62.5%). Two women reported accomplishing tasks and goals as most rewarding (25%) and one stated that impacting the individual lives was the most rewarding (12.5%). Secondary rewards mentioned by participants included impacting families of workers ($n = 2$, 25%), and working towards a greater purpose, such as social justice or philanthropy ($n = 6$, 75%).

The eighth category codified the *challenges of leadership* that participants faced. By far, the most common challenge reported by participants was having to fire or lay off people ($n = 5$, 62.5%). This challenge was often placed within the context of a glass cliff leadership role, wherein the organizations at hand were experiencing some kind of crisis or downturn. Other challenges included competing with friends ($n = 1$, 12.5%) and balancing being demanding and fair ($n = 1$, 12.5%). All participants cited lessons learned from each challenge, indicating that they were resilient and able to gain knowledge or skills despite a difficult situation ($n = 8$, 100%).

The ninth category codified phenomena related to *work-life balance*. Although several participants expressed dissatisfaction with the term “work-life balance,” I will use it here because it is a term often used in the literature and is one that most people are familiar with. At the core of the term, work-life balance refers to the amount of time an individual spends working compared to the amount of time he or she spends with family or doing things he or she enjoys. Phenomena that were sorted into this category included challenges such as feelings of guilt related to an inability to spend as much time with family as desired, as well as suggestions on what has helped participants find a better sense of balance, including remembering their larger

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purpose and values, using tools like meditation, and finding support from superiors who understood their priorities. Five of the women I interviewed had biological children (62.5%), one had stepchildren (12.5%) and two did not have any children (25%). All of the women I interviewed were married or in a committed relationship with a supportive partner (100%). Four women reported that they struggled to find a balance between spending time with family and spending time working (50%). Four reported that they made career choices in part due to family considerations, such as working part time to care for children (n = 1, 12.5%), working more to allow a partner to take time off work to care for children, thereby taking on the role of breadwinner (n = 2, 25%), or seeking to advance their careers to increase sense of financial security for themselves and their children in the event that something happened to their partners (n = 1, 12.5%).

The last category codified phenomena related to *gender bias*. Examples of phenomena included specific examples of experiencing gender stereotypes, attempts by participants to portray themselves as masculine or emulate their male role models, belief systems regarding women as leaders, and experiences with overt sex discrimination. Seven women reported that at some point in their career they had experienced bias due to their gender (87.5%). One woman reported experiencing overt discrimination due to her gender (12.5%). Two women described acting in a stereotypically masculine way to engender respect from others (25%), and two women (25%) described belief systems about inherent differences in the way they as women lead others (e.g., collaboratively) compared to how most men lead (e.g., directive).

Themes

Data from each of the ten categories that emerged from the data were next grouped into five interpretive themes. Themes were identified based on frequency across participants and relevance to the research question. Each of the five themes are listed with contributing categories in brackets: (1) awareness of gender bias [gender bias, challenges of leadership, comprehensive belief systems], (2) leader identity development [early influences and precipitating factors, leadership styles, strategies and skill sets], (3) support systems [work-life balance, support systems, mentorship], (4) relationship building [strategies and skill sets, rewards of leadership], and (5) a greater purpose [comprehensive belief systems, rewards of leadership]. In the following thematic analysis, pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of all participants.

Awareness of gender bias: Throughout most interviews, accounts, and experiences related to perceived gender bias were woven in among suggestions and advice on how to overcome such biases. Sally, a regional manager at a large utilities company, began her leadership experience when she was put in charge of over 50 male union workers. She recounted her experience dealing with several workers who were initially dubious about her ability to lead due to her gender.

They expanded my job and added sixty gas servicemen to it, all union, and [I had] never supervised union employees. So, I remember my first meeting with sixty folks, and my boss introducing the restructuring, and [saying] “Now this woman is going to be your boss.” Two guys [who were] hard-core union

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through the ranks had this *‘Like hell I am working for a woman’* kind of attitude. Literally, they said that to me.

In this situation, Sally experienced overt bias related to her ability to be an effective leader specifically due to her gender. Because she was working in a predominately-male oriented work environment, being a woman in a position of authority put her into a category with few other individuals. Her explanation on how she was able to overcome the biases and lead her team was by becoming connected with each member, and through building relationships with individuals. She explained that she “converted” her team members by showing that she was interested in what they did on a day-to-day basis.

I wanted to know what people did, so I went on a lot of ride
alongs, and just listened, listened, listened, listened. I just soaked
in as much as I could and basically figured out at that point that my
real role was to remove roadblocks and ask myself, “How do I get
things out of the way for these experts to do their jobs?”

Lauren, a state government official, described dealing on a regular basis with what she deemed “the old boys network.” Lauren had had several male mentors that had been exceptionally helpful to her along the way, but she also recounted negative experiences with several other men working in her field who were dismissive of her and of other women. About the men who exhibited gender bias, she said

I have a name for those men. They’re Peacocks. They start to puff
up and puff out and you can just kind of see the spread. You just
kind of know at that point that they are dismissing you in their

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head, and basically just trying to show how much more smart, and brilliant, and strategic they are. And to me, it's just a level of testosterone. I mean, literally, their testosterone level rises and I just have to be like, this is a chemical thing. I cannot control it. They're just going to have to do their little peacock thing and I am just going to have to wait for it to be over.

Lauren also described specific examples of people who exhibited gender bias toward her professionally, and recounts how she reacted to such people. About a particular instance where she felt dismissed because of her gender by a former government official, she recounts:

I was talking to somebody and he literally came and turned his back to me to talk to the person. He didn't join our conversation. He literally came in, and men will do that. They'll just be totally dismissive that you are having a conversation with someone. I just looked at the other person, like, "I will talk to you later." I just ignored it for the most part.

In this instance, Lauren reported believing that it was more effective for her to simply ignore the behavior than confront it head on. If she had assertively addressed the problematic behavior or engaged in confrontation, she would have run the risk of being negatively perceived as aggressive or non-communal. Risking a perceived incongruity between her gender and status could have resulted in even more prejudice and reinforced a vicious cycle. Because leaders are expected to have more agentic than communal qualities, if Lauren had conformed more to her gender role she risked "failing" to meet the requirements of her leadership role, but conforming

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to her leadership role could produce a “failure” to meet the requirements of her gender role. Because they felt that they needed to act more masculine to fit in with a male professional culture, several participants also described acting in a stereotypically masculine way to help disprove perceived gender stereotypes. Angela, a small business owner and former manager of a global communications company stated that she felt fortunate to have had mentors who encouraged her to take on leadership roles despite her gender, saying:

This was 1974. Most people looked at people like me as someone to sleep with. And there were certainly a lot of women I knew that that’s how they thought they had to get to the top. But I think that because of the situation with my Dad and what I had seen, I wasn’t intimidated. And it got me into trouble sometimes. I mean, I was pretty uppity!

Angela also stated that if she could go back and tell her younger self one thing about being a leader that she knows now, she would have advised herself not to try to break perceived gender stereotypes by acting in an unfeminine way, which was not in line with her personality. Early in her career, Angela took the tactic of attempting to change her behavior and image to seem more masculine and thus, more in line with the leader stereotype. Retrospectively, however, she believed that attempting to fit in to the “tough guy” role was an unnecessary step in her path toward becoming a leader, and was actually detrimental to her genuine image.

It’s still very much a man’s world in terms of business. And it was so much a man’s world then. There was an attitude that I had to be pretty ballsy in order to succeed. And if I could have counseled

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myself back then, I would have said, “No, you need to be more of who *you* are.” I remember I used to swear to get people’s attention. And it worked! But then they also had a certain impression of me. And I remember overhearing my boss at one point telling one of his peers, “You know Angela is such a feminine woman. Why does she trash talk all the time?” And I was shocked.

Angela was not the only participant who described swearing as a way to convey to others that she was “tough.” In describing how she fits into her workplace despite her gender, Lauren said, “Luckily I have a really bad mouth. So, they’re like ‘Oh, she’s not that dainty.’” While most of the women I interviewed recounted at least one experience of overt or perceived gender bias, there was one exception. Liya, a medical doctor and founder of a global women’s health initiative reported that she had had the opposite experience, stating:

Honestly, I think we are just lucky to be living in this time and age when we can accomplish what we want to accomplish. It’s very different. I am much more optimistic, and I never really felt that people made decisions against me because I am a woman. If they did, I just never noticed.

Interestingly, the idea that women do not think of themselves as leaders came up several times within interviews. One participant stated that prior to being asked for an interview for this project, she had actually not thought of herself as being a leader, despite the fact that she is currently a pioneer in her field. However, because most women have biases that equate leadership with masculine qualities and followership with feminine, it can interfere with their

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abilities to identify as leaders and be seen by others as leaders. The development of a leader identity among participants is the next theme that was explored.

Leader identity development: For many participants, their identity as a leader began at an early age. Many described leadership as coming “naturally,” as though it was an innate characteristic and they had never really made a conscious decision to become leaders. Lauren recounted an experience in high school in which she was dissatisfied with the leadership of her band and led a group of students to talk to the principal of the school in order to get what she perceived as fair treatment. She said, “We worked it out, but it was kind of like ‘Listen, this isn’t right! There has got to be a solution. I’m not going to be dictated to!’”

For several participants, early influences, especially parents, had a significant impact on their identity development as a leader. Rebecca, a small business owner, recounted her relationship with her father as a big influence in her development as a leader, explaining, “My Dad was a strong leader. He was the mayor of our little town, so he was a big influence. He was very well liked and he was always the leader of the pack with his friends, and his group, and whatever he did.”

Rebecca also cited a desire to challenge others’ assumptions that she was not capable of achieving as much as she has. A tendency toward high achievement, financial independence, self-reliance, and going above and beyond what was expected was observed in several other participants’ stories. Several participants mentioned fathers who were early influences on leadership identity development. Early exposure to leadership through a parental figure, as well as exposure to a business environment, helped introduce participants to leader-follow dynamics. Having a parent who was a leader not only normalized the leader-follower dichotomy; it also

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gave participants a leadership model to emulate from an early age. Given that leaders in the workplace have traditionally been male, it makes sense that many participants' first model leaders were their fathers. Having a trusted parent to model allowed participants to have a basis from which they could explore their own leadership styles. Like Rebecca, Angela also cited her father as an important factor in her development as a leader.

My father was an executive and I grew up imitating him. He used to take me to the office sometimes on Saturday, so I grew up never being afraid of those environments and seeing the distinction between the people who were natural followers and the people who were natural leaders. And I think that helps shape a person. Also, I don't particularly like working for people. I realize that there are a lot of different ways to lead. Once I understood that there just isn't a cookie-cutter approach [to leadership], I think that it really helped my own self-confidence.

Emma, a small business owner with management experience in a national health organization, also reported exhibiting leadership tendencies at an early age. She recounted a recent exchange with a woman with whom Emma serves on a local school board and has also known since she was very young. According to Emma, the woman remarked that she had noticed leadership tendencies in Emma since preschool, saying, "You have been doing this since you were three! You have been telling people where to go and what to do and they just listen to you. And you are the one who kind of gets everything organized. When you have an idea or someone else has an idea, you're the one who sort of makes it happen." About her identity development as a leader, Emma went on to say "I guess it is something that has always come pretty naturally to

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me. I see an opportunity and I like to puzzle through problems to make something happen. I see individual players and how they make a team, and then articulate what their role could be if they so choose.”

The importance of authenticity, integrity, and the integration of one’s core values was another theme related to identity development in the women I interviewed. Adherence to personal values and the ability to convey those values to followers is one aspect of the idealized influence factor of a transformational leadership style. Regarding one aspect of what, to her, makes a great leader, Angela remarked,

The core of what leadership really means to me is being B-E-I-N-G. It’s about who the person is. It’s about the integration of their core values and how their behaviors, wherever they are, are a good match to that. Great leaders don’t send out a lot of mixed messages. Their messages are pretty consistent and so there is an authenticity there that is unmistakable. And that is what people want. And that is why they follow them.

Angela described the qualities of authenticity and integrity as inspirational to the people she led. The ability to inspire others was another important aspect of a good leader, according to several participants. Angela noted,

You know, the Latin word for breath is “spirare” – and the word inspire has that word in it. And that’s what I think about when you’re around somebody that can breathe life into you. That’s what it feels like to be around a leader. I don’t care whether you’re

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producing Armstrong ceiling tiles or business ethics. It can be anywhere.

Angela also noted that being present, in the moment, was a way for her to be a more authentic version of herself and thus, a better leader. Angela spoke of presence as both an action (e.g., cultivating mindful awareness) and as an attribute that allowed her to become confident in her ability as a leader and effectively manage a team. In fact, presence, according to Angela, was the most important aspect of a good leader. The importance of being genuine and secure in their personal identities helped Angela and other female leaders become confident in their abilities to lead, and this confidence engendered trust from followers. Explaining how being “present” both mentally and physically in her role as a leader helped her become more confident and encourage similar behavior in her followers, Angela remarked,

It doesn't matter how you act as a leader, if you're not present as a leader, then you're not there. And then you don't encourage other people to be there. There is a lightness of being [when you are present as a leader] that just gives you the agility you need to be able to move from one moment to the next.

The importance of being authentic with one's followers, even when mistakes are made, was echoed by several interviewees. Sally, a regional manager of a local utilities company, eloquently summed up her understanding of how her gender interacts with the qualities of authenticity and individual consideration to impact her ability to be a strong leader. Echoing Angela's emphasis on becoming comfortable in one's genuine identity as a female leader, Sally noted that it's important to follow one's instincts regardless of whether they help one fit into the

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leader stereotype. Being genuine, including being able to admit when she had made a mistake, made Sally accessible and relatable to her followers.

Don't think that you have to be so much better than a guy; because you're a woman you have to prove some sort of garbage. No, just be true to yourself. Listen to your heart, listen to your gut, and don't let all the books override. And know that you're going to mess up. Being vulnerable is so huge. Nobody follows someone who's perfect. They follow someone who's willing to say "I'm human, I stepped in it. I blew it. Here's what I plan on doing about it. I'm sorry. I should have done this." Being real.

Sally also noted that being a strong leader is different than being a strong manager, a distinction that was made by several participants. To Sally, a leader is a facilitator, whose main priority is to enable, inspire, and encourage her followers. Her tendency to decline personal glory in favor of acknowledging the collective contributions of her team members is characteristic of a feminine, communal leadership style. Rather than drawing attention to her own accomplishments, Sally focused on the actions of others, which allowed her to effectively reinforce the positive behaviors of her team members and increase the likelihood that desired behaviors would be repeated. According to Sally, leadership has less to do with gender than with one's ability to step back from the spotlight and give positive feedback to followers.

It's not about whether you're a woman or a man. It's about the difference between being a manager and being a leader. Leaders lead the way and they remove roadblocks. They take in everything,

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they listen to everything, and then they help with the assessments.

You don't have to be out there being *the* one. Don't forget to recognize the great work that the people on your team are doing.

They are what make you a strong leader. You're either going to allow them to let you lead or not.

According to many participants, mentorship had a large role to play in their identity development as well. Each one of the women I interviewed had a story to tell about a particular mentor who believed in their abilities to take on progressively bigger roles, sometimes even before they believed in themselves. Lauren, a high-ranking government official with an engineering background, described one particularly negative experience she had with formal mentorship.

I don't like to be told that I have a mentor, which happened once. That was like the worst nightmare of my entire life. I was being told I had a mentor. Like they picked him for me. It was the oddest thing. The guy came into work after I got in there and he gave me readings. Three-ring binders full of engineering standards like how high a curb has to be and the radius of stuff. I'm like "Don't you have a project I should be working on? I mean I can buy this." But he gave me that at my desk and I read it and sat there for two hours. And I wanted to hit him. I was like "What the hell is wrong with you?" So I've picked some of my mentors and asked them directly. And then some of them just kind of happened.

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In this instance, Lauren's negative experience with a mentor hinged on a crucial mistake. Her mentor gave her work that was unstimulating to her, almost to the point of being demeaning. Later he made a second mistake by crossing professional boundaries and disclosing too much personal information, further damaging the relationship. Lauren objected morally to her mentor's reaction to some events in his personal life that he chose to disclose, causing her to lose even more respect for her mentor. Other times, mentors who were not particularly helpful gave participants insight into what characteristics they did not want to emulate, and what behaviors to avoid when they themselves took on mentees. One participant described one particular supervisor who berated her in front of her peers, and she now consciously tries not to emulate that person's behavior when she mentors others.

Taking on the role of mentor to other women was also a common theme described within the interviews related to leader identity development. While some participants had taken part in a formal mentorship program, in which a mentor was assigned to them, others participated in more informal mentorship structures. For example, a mentor simply took them under their wing. Speaking about her process of finding mentors, Emma explained,

I have never looked for a mentor, and yet I felt fortunate to always have mentors, men and women. And sometimes you do not want to keep being put into those roles, and you have so many demands on your time. And yet people will say, "Oh, but you're so good at *this*, or you're so good at *this*, and would you serve in this role?" And it's your commitment to other people that wills you forward, even though you think that you can't do another thing. Because, in the

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end I am really committed to the community; I am really committed to this person and I trust their judgment.”

Sally, who worked with a predominately male workforce, recounts her reaction to a mentor when he chose to promote her and move her into a non-traditional role for a woman at the time, a role that had previously been held by men. She reportedly asked her boss,

Are you putting me in this role because you think I'll be successful, or is it because I am a woman? And he said, “Both. I think they need a woman there, but I know you're going to be successful. I would not put you in a role that you wouldn't be successful in.” I give him a lot of kudos for giving me a shot. I have had a lot of great bosses. I have had *great* bosses. I was thinking about our interview today, and all of my mentors have been men. And that's interesting, you know, especially in utilities. There are a lot of engineers and stuff, and that has been traditionally men.”

Angela, who participates in a formal mentorship program with students at a local college, describes that mentoring and teaching her young female mentee has been equally beneficial to her, because “when you teach, boy do you learn a lot.” Liya, who found that her biggest challenge was being able to balance all the things in her life that were important to her, commented that she was helped by consulting mentors not just about professional matters, but also about how to balance work and home life.

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I mean my biggest challenge is balancing all of these work things and still having personal time to my family and myself. That's a work in progress. You kind of have to check and say, "Okay, how am I going to make all of these things work? I spent so much time and energy and money on my training." You can't just say, "I don't want to do it anymore." So, having mentors and people who have been through it really helps, and not being shy to ask for direction. Not feeling like you have to have it all under control.

Several participants mentioned being able to admit to a trusted advisor when they were struggling was a sign of strength. Having people they could rely on for consultation and validation was important to participant's abilities to build successful support networks. Mentors, family members, and peers were integral parts of many participants' support systems, which is the next theme that was explored.

Support Systems: The importance of having a good support system was another theme that emerged from the analysis of participant interviews. Good support networks for participants included both professional and personal supporters. Many participants reported that they regularly engaged in some sort of informal or formal consultation when they were struggling professionally, either with superiors and mentors or with their peers.

Informal support came from a variety of sources. Emma reported learning vicariously through others as a source of support, saying she was helped by "learning from other people's experiences, where they made mistakes so that I don't have to make the mistakes. [Learning from] where they had successes so that I would know what to do to have success." Emma also

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went on to say that superiors who were understanding of her priorities were instrumental in her development as a leader, and their flexibility and understanding of both her personal and professional priorities likely kept her from being forced to choose between her family and career, and possibly even leaving the work environment.

Having bosses who understood that I was a really dedicated professional and a really dedicated mother and family member.

Absolutely. For me that was probably what meant the most to my personal support system, just because I could have chosen to drop out. I wasn't forced to make a choice between the workforce or my family. What do you think am I going to choose? And I think that there has been a trend that is good for women in that we don't want women to drop out. We want them to be engaged and we know that they have the ability to be leaders and so in order to do that we have to make some different accommodations. They were not just flexible, but understanding of my priorities.

Working for organizations and individual superiors who understood her priorities was just one part of Emma's support system. Formal consultation groups, in addition to informal consultation with trusted peers, were also helpful to Emma. She described developing and participating in an original formal consultation group for professional women, where she discussed not only her professional goals, but her personal priorities as well. Issues of family life, which could have been viewed as obstacles to success, or irrelevant to professional life, in a group comprised of men, were readily discussed in the group of women. Open discussion

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allowed Emma to talk about family priorities frankly and seek honest advice from women who had experience maintaining both professional and family-oriented identities.

I started a women's group and our [intent] was to support each other's professional goals. We were all in different sectors and we developed a mission statement, our values, and our strategic intent. It wasn't just about who I was professionally and how I was going to extend my career professionally. It also included my family and what I was doing with my family. It included my community and what I was doing with my community. It was our way of seeing our whole lives.

Focusing on priorities and personal values while maintaining a commitment to their work was a strategy that many participants used. Some participants reported that they discovered the limits to how much they were willing to compromise on personal values when confronted with challenges at work. Angela described one particularly challenging situation that challenged both her leadership abilities and personal values. While working for a company that was in "crisis mode" and about to enter Chapter 11 bankruptcy, Angela found herself in a position where she was required to fire hundreds of workers. Many of these employees were individuals she had personally hired when the company was in a financial upturn. She said she handled the situation by emotionally distancing herself and "toughing it out." Following the incident, Angela decided that she would be unwilling to repeat the experience, and discovered that it was a personal boundary she did not want to cross again. Angela explained,

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I just absolutely refused as the head of Human Resources to do this en masse and I insisted that I meet with each person one on one. I mean, some of these people this company fired, they were third generation and they were in their 50's, and I was about to tell them they were going to get 15 cents on the dollar of their retirement. They had worked for this company for their whole lives, and so there were a lot of grown men in my office who were in tears. It was pretty awful. And the hardest part was that I wanted to cry with them and I couldn't. I had to maintain an open heart with a sharp intellect. I had to be wise as a serpent and gentle as a lamb and it was hard to be both at the same time. [Through this experience,] I learned that things can get destroyed much, much faster than they can be built, and that one person can impact an empire.

After this harrowing experience, Angela left the organization, not having been blamed for the company's financial downturn but emotionally drained by the stress of the glass cliff nonetheless. Rather than feeling empowered in her high-status position as the head of Human Resources, Angela felt helpless to stop the financial catastrophe caused by her CEO's poor decision-making. Even though she was not personally responsible for the organizational downturn that led hundreds of employees to lose their jobs and a large chunk of their retirement benefits, the emotional costs associated with her leadership responsibilities caused Angela, a valuable organizational asset, to leave the company.

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Ultimately, Angela decided that the best way to cope with the challenges associated with her position as head of Human Resources was to leave the company. Other strategies that participants used to cope with the challenging aspects of leadership included professional consultation with trusted peers and supervisors. Consultation with peers and superiors was commonly cited as helpful when other study participants had to cope with the challenging situation of firing someone. By far, the most commonly cited challenge was firing someone or laying them off. About feelings of self-doubt when it came time to lay someone off and the role that informal consultation with peers helped support her development, Rebecca commented,

You have good friends that go, “You are going to hire people and you’re going to fire them, or they are going to quit. But yeah, it’s going to happen.” And then once you talk through the situation, “This is what is going on. What have I done wrong?” And usually when five of your business friends go, “There is nothing you have done wrong. You need to fire this person,” then you go do it.

While most participants stated that they never became completely comfortable with the process of letting people go, most said they became more confident in their decision-making process after having discussed the situation with someone they trusted. Sally cited peer consultation as more critical than consultation with her superiors, stating, “Most of my support came from my peers versus my bosses. I mean, I can go to my bosses and ask for support, but truly figuring out what was going on and how to work through the system, how to get things done, getting sage advice, came from my peers.” For this participant, consulting with peers allowed her to effectively navigate the organizational system in which she operated and deal with the challenges and stresses of work. Some participants mainly sought consultation only with

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people in their professional network. For the majority of the women, however, family consultation and support was an important foundation for professional success.

Many participants also cited family as a major source of support that impacted their abilities to be successful leaders. All participants in this study were in stable primary relationships, and many reported that significant others who were willing and able to take on some of the responsibilities at home were instrumental to their professional success. Liya, who worked long hours and had a child early on in her career, reported that having a partner who was able to take on a significant portion of the childcare was a vital contributor to her ability to continue down her career path. She reported that, although she was not able to spend as much time with her new baby as she would have liked, his presence in her life provided comfort and respite from professional worries. She reported, “I barely saw that kid. But you know what? It was the best thing, because I would be exhausted when I came home at night and he would make me laugh and I would forget everything that happened during the day that was painful.” Even though Liya’s professional life was demanding, having a supportive partner made balancing work and home life more manageable. For Liya, spending time with family allowed her to temporarily escape the stress of work, and it added to a facet of purpose and meaning to her life.

Finding a greater meaning and support from their personal lives was one way participants coped with the stress their work as leaders entailed. Caring for family and creating a secure financial base for loved ones was often cited as a part of participants’ greater meaning. The ability to contribute in a meaningful way to interpersonal relationships both within and outside family was rewarding to participants on a personal level, and it also helped engender trust among followers. Connecting with individual team members and helping other people reach their personal and professional goals allowed participants to find greater personal meaning, discover

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collaborative solutions to problems, and model organizational citizenship behavior. Through building a trusting and connected relationship on an individual level with their team members, all participants described utilizing some aspects of transformational leadership.

Relationship building: Participants regularly commented on the importance of their relationships with both superiors and their direct reports. Being able to build relationships and connect with others was one of the biggest competencies that participants had. Collaborating with others, building professional networks, getting to know individual team members, and listening, observing, and making mental notes were all behaviors that participants regularly engaged in. Sally, a participant who described a particularly communal approach to team building, emphasized the belief that before she earned the trust and respect of her followers, she was effectively powerless as a leader. As the first female regional manager of a team of almost entirely male union electrical workers, Sally had the challenge of proving her competence as a leader despite gender stereotypes. Although she started in her current position with the expectation that her authority would be automatically accepted, she quickly discovered that she needed her employees' trust before she could truly lead them. She found that her opinion was more valued when she showed her employees that she was willing to listen to their feedback. She reported that she slowly earned the respect of her employees not by simply managing behavior by relaying commands and directions, but by listening to and encouraging upward communication, and then reflecting back "the bigger picture." About the importance of collaboration and considering the input of each individual, Sally remarked,

All you can do is attempt to steer, offer observations, do a heck of a lot of listening, and then continue to throw out the big picture.

When you first start out in leadership, you think you're just going

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to order people around, and they are just going to hop. It doesn't work that way. The longer you're in it, the more you learn from the people you work with, and the more valued your advice. You continue to step back, going broader and wider, but you can't lose contact with individual needs and the team goals. You can't forget those, because those are the folks who make the big stuff work.

Impacting individual lives, connecting one-on-one, and building relationships with individual employees was also a motivator for Irene, a business owner, philanthropist, and community activist. She cited that being able to impact individual lives as well as help employees' families have a higher standard of living was important to her end goal as a business leader. To Irene, the best way to share her personal values of philanthropy, diversity, and education and encourage positive behavior in her employees was to be a model for them. Regarding how she strives to have a positive impact on her team members while modeling her own values and positive behavior to others, Irene explained,

I hope I am a role model to others. We have a lot of young women here who are not native born in the U.S. They come from all over the world. I really try to promote some of [my personal values] like philanthropy, education, and volunteering, and just being nice to others. I hope that [my employees] can see what I am doing and learn from that. And because we're smaller company, we can [accommodate employees] in ways some bigger companies can't be. If I have an employee who comes to me and says, "You know

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my kid is doing something in school tomorrow and I really need to be there” I’ll say, “Yeah! *Of course* your kid is important.”

In this instance, Irene’s values and vision of creating a business that was financially successful as well as a caring and humane work environment helped her develop a greater purpose. Her ability to be flexible in working with employees helped her earn their respect and commitment. Irene’s effective leadership strategies are almost certainly a contributor to her company’s consistent regional recognition as a top workplace. The organization, which she helped found, has been ranked as one of the Best 100 companies to Work For in Oregon for the past 13 years, one of the 100 Best Green Companies in Oregon for the past five years, and ranked as one of the Healthiest Employers by Portland Business Journal for the past four years. Taking responsibility for the health of her employees in addition to creating a top-notch product has allowed Sally to build a dedicated community of employees who are proud to represent the company. Working toward personal goals, inspiring others to achieve a purpose of their own, and creating organizational momentum towards realizing a greater purpose was the next theme that emerged in Sally’s and other participants’ stories.

A Greater Purpose: In virtually all interviews, the theme of leading with a greater life purpose in mind surfaced, and this seemed integral to each participant’s conceptualization of leadership in her life as well as the development of her identity as a leader. The participants who seemed the happiest and most effective were the ones who had a clear sense that the purposes they were pursuing were aligned with their personal values and contributing to some kind of greater good. Participants who mentioned working toward a greater purpose were also the ones who implied that authenticity and adherence to one’s morals was a core value. Participants who described having a greater purpose described it as a compelling reason to face their fears and

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challenges and take action despite their insecurities. Dianne and Lauren recounted their experiences passing laws that impacted the lives of individual people. Rebecca's greater purpose was being able to advocate for justice for individuals who could not advocate for themselves as a business owner and an individual. Sally, Angela, Emma, and Irene were able to put their leadership skills and experiences toward leading initiatives that they were passionate about in and outside of work, including social justice, human rights, and education. Liya worked to provide adequate healthcare services to those in need and toward finding better medical treatments than are currently available. Regarding the rewards of her leadership of a global women's health initiative, Liya said,

When [patients] are in the hospital, they are so grateful to have this care for free by people who are trained. They just feel like we care, which is really wonderful. And obviously, like I said, we get a lot out of it too. Hearing the stories and looking at the pictures of the women smiling after their surgery is all you need. It kind of makes you say, "Okay I can do the fundraising now, and I can do all the stuff to make it happen." It's worth all the work that you put into it.

For all of these women, being able to connect to others and help instill in their followers the same sense of urgency to work toward a greater purpose allowed them to inspire trust, increase their team members' sense of urgency, enhance organizational citizenship, and help them find greater meaning in their work.

DISCUSSION

Many participants described their leadership styles as open and participatory, though they were also directive, demanding, and focused on bottom line results. They also reported experiencing differential assessment based on acting in ways that were outside of what was expected female behavior. The research shows that women who act in stereotypically masculine ways are viewed less favorably due to the perceived deviance from socially prescribed gender roles. Men, however, are seen as acting in congruence with their prescribed masculine roles when they act as leaders. To cope with perceived gender role incongruity, successful female leaders generally work hard and seek leadership styles that do not elicit resistance to their authority by challenging norms that women be egalitarian and supportive of others (Eagly et al., 1992; Belasen, 2012).

The women interviewed for the purposes of this study, especially those who worked in male-dominated fields like Sally and Dianne, took on stereotypically feminine leadership styles, styles that were also consistent with transformational leadership, exhibiting interpersonal and communal orientations to bring people together to work towards a common goal. Sally in particular was put in a position of leadership in a male-oriented industry and she coped with that situation by behaving democratically, allowing her subordinates to participate in decision making and showing that she was interested in learning about what they did. Sally's work environment was inherently gendered, which affected her leadership development efforts. In this environment, Sally's very presence, performance, and success was scrutinized, measured, and evaluated differently from men's because women in her position were numerically scarce. By leading in a participative and collaborative mode and accomplishing her managerial tasks by taking into consideration individual contributions, she was able to foster acceptance from initially skeptical

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subordinates, thereby removing one barrier to leader effectiveness. She coped with the situation by adopting a transformational leadership style, mentoring followers, and attending to them as individuals.

Response Behaviors and Strategies for Coping with Gender Bias

One theme that was apparent from the data was an awareness of gender bias in the work place. This is both directly and indirectly a consequence of organizational and social cultural norms, the underrepresentation of women in positions of leadership, and overt gender discrimination. The participants in this study cited a variety of response behaviors and strategies for dealing with gender bias and discrimination, ranging from demonstrating their competencies as strong, skillful, persistent women leaders to going above or around the barrier, to seeking out women mentors who had dealt effectively with the glass ceiling and glass cliff before them. For Lauren, it was more effective to simply leave a job once she felt like she had hit the ceiling in one work environment and thus, go around the barrier to advance her leadership abilities. That organization lost a very good leader on their team due to ingrained beliefs and a system set up to ensure she stayed in a lower level position. Staying connected and reframing her work context to make it more meaningful by integrating her roles to achieve wholeness was how Angela found work that was more satisfying and in line with her individual needs as a leader and a woman. Emma explained how having supportive superiors who were understanding of her personal and professional priorities is a wonderful example of how flexible workplaces can both achieve success and keep their talented female leaders. Through talking with the participants, it became apparent that change in formal organizational mechanisms is not enough to lower the negative effects of gender bias when it comes to leadership development for women. Individual women

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must also take personal initiative by integrating the ideas and insights mentioned above to become successful leaders.

Diversity: The research has shown that for women of color, opportunities to advance in the ranks of organizations are even more limited than for white women, due to lack of mentors and sponsors, and because of failed organizational initiatives to address racial and gender biases (Hopkins, O'Neil, Pasarelli, & Bilimoria, 2008). Unfortunately, possibly in part due to the sampling method utilized and partly due to the underrepresentation of women of color in leadership positions in general, all but one of the participants in this study were white. Liya, the one African American woman I interviewed, indicated that barriers related to her gender were not very apparent to her, and this contrasted with the reports of the rest of my participants. She did, however, mention challenges related to immigration. She had to contend with biases and challenges related to her country of origin and this likely overshadowed perceived gender biases. It is suspected that challenges related to citizenship may feel more salient than challenges related to gender in terms of one's ability to advance in a career. Liya's work and ultimate success, despite her status as both an ethnic and gender minority, is a testament to her ability to inspire trust and a sense of urgency in her followers and to inspire a greater purpose in others. She cited the enjoyment and satisfaction that she derived from her career as an important reason to continue in her work along with the amount of time and money she had invested in her professional development.

Liya was also able to utilize her knowledge of American and African cultures to lead a global health initiative. Indeed, research has shown that women can excel in positions of global leadership, especially when they have specialized knowledge of different cultures (Belasen, 2012). The ability to lead people globally is not merely based on a single competency, nor is it

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based on a collection of individual leadership competencies. Rather, global leadership abilities involve a broad spectrum of behaviors that include a penchant for learning, an appreciation for diverse cultures, an understanding of cultural norms and ideologies, and a deep-rooted awareness of international climates. Liya reported that she saw herself as “a bridge” between the two cultures she worked with, with a specialized knowledge of the intercultural ethics and competencies. Not only was she passionate about her work bringing better healthcare to underserved women globally, she was able to combine her knowledge of local customs and practices with her understanding of health care to help her team navigate between cultures with tact, empathy, and morality.

Strengths and Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, this study was performed only once and sampled only eight individuals from only one major metropolitan area. It is likely that women in other areas of the country have different lived experiences with leadership development and gender bias. However, as a qualitative phenomenological study, the results are not intended to be representative of the population at large but rather to provide a detailed description of the lived experiences of only a small selection of women leaders. Secondly, this study was limited by the very small deviations in race and ethnicity. Variations in race and ethnicity, as well as greater variations in age, could yield different results and give greater insight into the special challenges that women of color face in seeking positions of organizational leadership.

A strength of this study is related to its sample of women in a wide variety of industries. Because most research on leadership development in women has focused on professionals in the educational and corporate sectors, the present study presents a unique look into the behaviors and

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experiences of established women leaders in a range of fields including healthcare, information technology, consulting, finance, and government. Thus, the results of this study can likely be applied to women who aspire to positions of leadership in a diverse array of industries.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: A LEADERSHIP-TRAINING MODEL FOR FIRST-TIME FEMALE MANAGERS

The research indicates that a transformational leadership style is instrumental in helping to establish trust, support, and personal identification of the follower with the leader and to promote organizational commitment. Given the apparent connection between transformational leadership and stereotypically feminine leadership behaviors (e.g., collaboration, individual consideration, and relationship building), organizations that are invested in developing good leaders are advised to focus particularly on their talented female managers whose unique developmental needs have been largely overlooked by current programs.

Given the analysis of the interview data and the research thus far on leadership development in women, it seems imperative that a leadership program for first-time female managers include strategies that are designed to meet their unique needs. Because women are underrepresented in leadership roles, they inherently have different resources, support systems, and expectations and often must respond to higher standards of competence and likeability than their male peers.

On the basis of the present study and current literature, this program model includes the components of assessment, training, coaching, mentoring, networking, experiential learning, and career development. Further recommendations are made based on the conceptualization of what was helpful to the women who participated in this study when they entered their first leadership role and how they handled stress associated with glass ceiling and glass cliff phenomena. It should also be noted that implementing one formal leadership training program is not sufficient to mitigate all organizational barriers to women who aspire to leadership roles. Change in formal

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organizational mechanisms such as policies, performance evaluations, and codes of behavior should also be considered when implementing an organizational intervention to lower the negative effects of gender bias in the workplace.

Assessment Tools

Assessment is an extremely valuable tool to women leaders, particularly 360-degree assessments, which allow them to get candid feedback from peers, supervisors, and subordinates that they may not otherwise get (Belasen et al., 2012). However, because assessment measures like the 360-degree feedback model were developed, based on conceptualization of leadership related to masculine qualities, traditional assessments of leadership inherently reflect gender stereotypes and prejudices. Thus, interpretation of leadership assessment tools should be undertaken only with the understanding of gender roles and norms prevalent in the workplace. It is also important that women are helped to understand the impact of leadership behaviors on assessments and helped to develop a broad repertoire of behaviors (instrumental, relational) to use when working with teams of individuals. It is important, however, to avoid placing the responsibility to cope with current organizational cultures solely on women. Organizations and society at large also have a role to play in helping women realize gender equality in the workplace.

Organizations that wish to implement a leadership development program for women need to work on becoming aware of bias in merit-based decision making processes that contribute to promotion and career advancement decisions. The gendered context of organizations must be recognized in any kind of assessment process. Thus, support for organizational culture change must come from the top. Work can be done with senior level managers to deconstruct gender

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stereotypes around leadership so that the variety of leadership styles women can use are better understood and appreciated. It is also recommended that organizations develop a method of tracking the equity by which performance-rating measures are developed and used to monitor for gender-based evaluation practices.

Training

Several participants cited formal training as one factor that was helpful to their development as leaders. Indeed, research supports the link between learning and performance. When participants were given opportunities to learn and grow, they tended to be more productive and loyal to their organizations. It seems clear that there is no substitute for at least a minimal level of didactic training in management and strategic operational skills. Managers within an organization take on a variety of roles including leadership, management, planning, as well as technical and administrative roles and, therefore, require some form of technical competence. Increasing knowledge, skills, and education of managers through formal processes is one clear way to ensure that they are developing the skills necessary to be successful in their new roles. Didactic training is one component of this leadership development program, as is finding new ways to measure the degree to which leaders feel their learning needs are being met. Organizations seeking to develop their talented women employees into successful leaders need to provide them with organizational support to continue their education and to complete organizational training programs to enhance their leadership knowledge and practice as well as methods to provide feedback about their developmental needs and interests. Providing some women-only groups in addition to mixed sex group trainings could help women feel comfortable opening up about challenges they face due to gender among their same-sex peers, more so than they might among a group of mostly men. This concept has been mentioned in previous research

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and fits the model of developing alternatives to traditionally male-oriented training models (Hopkins et al., 2008).

Coaching

Individual coaching can help women develop leadership skills and insights, and is one aspect of the leadership training program for first-time female managers. Coaching is included as an area of focus in this program because even though women who will be going into first-time management positions will presumably still be relatively low on the leadership ladder, they still can benefit greatly from the holistic and personalized feedback and attention that executive coaching can provide. Executive coaching is an intervention that employs a one-on-one relationship between a coach and a client, which is often used to enhance manager's opportunities, develop skills, promote knowledge and ability to reflect (Jowett, Kanakoglou, & Passmore, 2012). An effective working relationship between the coach and client is imperative to success, just as the client-therapist relationship is for the success of psychotherapy. One-on-one coaching can also help women think and act strategically, aid in their career planning, and allow them to share their personal challenges and struggles. Coaching in this model will help women access valuable personalized feedback, better understand how gender impacts the assessment process, and develop skills and insights to help mitigate the impact of organizational gender bias.

Mentoring and Networking

Mentoring opportunities that match women with senior management programs, including women mentors for men, is another component of this training model. A good mentor can provide career advice, give feedback on how to improve performance, help provide access to informal networks within the system, assist mentees in getting promoted to highly-visible

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positions, and help mentees cope with stress associated with glass cliff phenomena. Pairing women mentors with men can help foster understanding, appreciation, and respect, and it also can help organizations break free from being locked into only single-gender professional relationships. Women leaders can offer insights and opportunities for men, just as male mentors can help their female mentees become included in informal organizational networks. Mentors who can build access for mentees to influential decision-makers within organizations can support women's ambition and activation, and can provide critical resources. Transformational-based mentoring programs that focus on helping the mentee access levels of awareness of the processes involved in good leadership and facilitating a deeper level of learning is recommended. There should also be a focus on mentoring systems that sympathize with the need to integrate work and family roles, as many participants in this study explained were helpful. An adaptation of the minute mentoring model, using women who are leaders in a field relevant to the organization at hand, is used in this program to economize on numerically scarce women leaders' time. Women in this program will spend short periods of time working in small groups with individual mentors before selecting a mentor to help them through the remainder of the six-week program. Mentorship can be provided in person, if available, and options for teleconferencing can also be considered to facilitate connecting women with mentors.

Career Planning

One participant in this study reported the belief that a lack of long-term professional development planning for women was a large part of why organizational turnover for women is so high and the literature supports this claim. Focusing on career advancement and management development programs that take into account long-term strategic planning goals, rather than present, short-term goals, is very important in keeping talented women committed and engaged

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within an organization. Research has also shown that long-term career planning is more common for men than for women (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Career planning in this training model includes thinking about long-term goals as more of a marathon than a sprint, and that means planning for challenges related to slow development and responding to opportunities as they come up. Career planning also means considering how practical realities like family responsibilities will factor into the overall plan. Building on women's strengths in career planning, rather than focusing on the weaknesses, was one suggestion made by a study participant. The more women know about their areas of strength, the more they can realize the kind of work they want to do, and the kind of an impact they want to make. This will lead to a better understanding of how the strengths of others can complement their own, and a clearer sense of their overall career plans. This model encourages women to think about the achievements they are proudest of, what elements of their work bring them the greatest satisfaction. They will reassess their career plans at least once a year. This way, women in this program can identify the path that best accommodates their vision for their career and their life.

Experiential Learning

As evidenced by previous research on leadership program development models for women leaders (Berryman-Fink et al., 2003), experiential learning is an important part of developing leaders because it helps individuals make meaning from direct experience.

Experiential learning opportunities can also help women decide if a leadership role is actually a good fit for them and if it is truly a path they wish to pursue. Individuals often learn more from real experience than from theoretical discussions and the same is true for developing leadership skills. By exposing women to challenging experiences, their talents, skills, and knowledge can also be assessed. Experiential learning can come in the form of formal internships, or it can be as

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simple as putting women in a temporary position of leadership like managing a team for a single project. When women are given high-risk or high-visibility projects, their work becomes more observable to senior leaders and they have an opportunity to display their ability to create motion and momentum in others. This is why a visible experiential learning component is included in this training model. Without such opportunities senior managers may be unaware of the good work high-potential women are doing behind the scenes. This kind of experiential training gives both individual women and organizational leaders a chance to see their skills in action.

Building Buy-in

Before implementing any kind of formal leadership training program for women, there needs to be a level of buy-in to the need for specialized training for women from senior leaders. Thus, a pre-intervention assessment of the organizational culture and openness to change will be a crucial first step before implementing this model. After buy-in from the top has been established, the program can be implemented and the facilitator can begin the process of building commitment and interest from all organizational levels. What follows is an example of a six-week facilitated organizational intervention and leadership development program for women who are in first-time management positions. This model includes components of both individual and organization-wide interventions and is based on the assumption that buy-in from senior leaders would have already been established prior to beginning the intervention.

Six-week Program Model

In the first week of the program, the individual interventions for women selected to participate include orienting them to the program, assigning mentors if a mentorship relationship within the organization is not already in place, establishing a basis and time for one-on-one

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coaching with participants, assessing program goals, and beginning with the didactic leadership training component. The organization-wide intervention in the first week includes building awareness and visibility of the program among all employees, orienting middle managers to the program, and building organizational buy-in or commitment to the program. An adaptation of the minute mentoring (“Minute Mentoring,” 2013) program can be used in this model to help women to find a mentor who will be a good fit for the remainder of the program. From this point forward, topics for coaching will follow the topics of the weekly didactics and will focus on specific strategic organizational skill sets important to the specific women leader participants.

In the second and third weeks of the program, 360-degree assessments for each participant will be conducted. One-on-one coaching continues with the topic of understanding the effects of gender on the assessment process. Mentorship meetings also occur during this week, as does the didactic training component, which is aimed at increasing technical proficiency and enhancing theoretical understanding of transformational leadership in the second week. The didactic training component for the third week focuses on networking. If possible, a cross-gender mentorship relationship will be established among middle-managers.

In the fourth week of the program, individual feedback from the 360-degree assessments is given to individual participants. Individual coaching focuses on facilitating understanding of the feedback and integrating the information into women’s self-assessments. Didactics, skill-building, and mentoring continue. Didactics for this week focus on the topic of strategic planning skills. In this week, an experiential learning component is introduced in the form of a team-based project that individual participants will manage. Projects will vary based upon industry or field and individual expertise. The organizational intervention for week four includes a formal presentation to middle managers within the company regarding fair assessment practices with

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regard to diversity and gender. This week, the facilitator will also focus on eliciting feedback from middle and senior managers regarding the program thus far, focusing primarily on how it is being received at all organizational levels.

Week five of the program continues with both individual and organization interventions. On the individual level, the topic of focus for one-on-one coaching sessions for the week is career development and planning. Aspects of career and family goals are explored and incorporated into the plan. Didactics and skill building continue and feedback regarding the continued experiential learning component of the model is elicited from participants. Didactics for this week focus on career mapping. Organizationally, a meeting with middle and senior managers to discuss the implementation of an equity tracking system to monitor fair assessment and promotion practices also occurs during this week.

In the sixth and final week of the program, a final didactic training component that focuses on continued leadership identity development takes place and the experiential learning project is wrapped up. Feedback on all aspects of the program including the coaching, mentoring, training, and experiential learning modules is elicited from individual participants. A post-intervention assessment with participants is conducted to assess their progress toward leadership competency. This assessment includes interviews and feedback with the mentor, coach, and individual participants as well as an objective leadership behaviors survey that will be filled out on the participant by self, superiors, and subordinates. The final organizational intervention is conducted this week as well. This includes getting feedback on the program from middle and senior managers and conducting a post-intervention assessment of the organizational culture with regard to moving toward inclusion of female leaders and openness to continued organizational change. The layout of the program by week is shown in Table 1.

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Table 1

<i>Six-week leadership training model</i>		
	Individual Intervention	Organizational Intervention
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orientation to program ▪ Minute mentoring session ▪ Selection of mentors ▪ Schedule one-on-one coaching ▪ Assess goals for training ▪ Small group didactics – leadership style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organization-wide orientation to program ▪ Meeting with middle managers to provide program orientation and elicit buy-in
Week 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 360-degree assessments ▪ Individual coaching ▪ Mentoring ▪ Small group didactics – networking, transformational leadership ▪ Experiential learning project assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optional cross-gender mentorship session for middle managers

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Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 360-degree assessment feedback▪ Individual coaching to facilitate assessment understanding▪ Small group didactics – strategic planning▪ Mentoring▪ Experiential learning project begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Presentation to middle managers: Fair assessment practices▪ Elicit feedback for program
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Coaching topic – Career planning▪ Small group didactics – career mapping▪ Experiential learning project continues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Meeting with middle and senior managers to discuss equity tracking system
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Final didactics and coaching: Leadership identity development▪ Experiential project wrap-up▪ Feedback on program▪ Individual assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Feedback on program from senior and middle managers▪ Post-intervention assessment of organizational culture

CONCLUSION

This study and subsequent program development focuses on finding the best practices for working with individuals and intervening at an organizational level to develop leadership opportunities for women and keep talented women in roles that stimulate, challenge, and reward them. Overarching themes that emerged from the interviews conducted with women leaders indicated an awareness of gender bias in the workplace, followed by response behaviors, strategies, and skill sets for dealing with this type of bias. Response behaviors ranged from increasing productivity to display superior technical competence, going above or around the barriers, and seeking formal or informal consultation with mentors and peers. Other themes that emerged from the data included the importance of mentorship and informal support systems in leadership development, relationship building, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration as leadership behaviors, and discovering a greater purpose that gave meaning to leaders' work and lives. Interviewees reported taking control of their own careers and life-long goals, identifying individual learning agendas for their own leadership development, asking for support from peers, and seeking out mentors and superiors who were supportive of their needs and priorities, and leaving organizational environments that were under stimulating, overly-stressful, or emotionally draining.

Given what participants in this study reported and given the current literature, responsibility for developing the potential of women leaders rests with both individual women and the organizations that employ them. Given the lack of access to informal networks and high-visibility positions for women, it is especially important to foster accountability at all organizational levels, particularly when it comes to assessment and promotional decisions. Each of the themes that emerged from the data were used to create a model for women's leadership

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development that included the components of training, coaching, mentorship and networking, career planning, and experiential learning. These components were carefully selected and incorporated into the model to ensure an effective delivery of information, training, and support on all organizational levels

The leadership development of women employees is not only an ethical imperative grounded in promoting equitable and fair practices, but also a choice that can provide a strategic business advantage to organizations. It is not acceptable that organizations are promoting “token” women to higher ranks; there is a need for support from the top for practices that promote true gender equity to increase the likelihood of success. Women can bring different perspectives to the table, give unique insights into overall business relations, and encourage employee organizational citizenship through their unique leadership behaviors (Bass et al., 2003; Cuadrado et al., 2008; Belasen, 2012). Promoting a leadership development culture for women within an organization will likely require a culture shift at all levels in the organization. The developmental training model that was proposed as a result of this research takes into account the need for a mindset shift within all levels of the organization, increasing the likelihood that organizations that implement this program will be able to keep their talented women in the workforce and realize a distinct competitive advantage over organizations that neglect to tap into the unique leadership capacities of women. Development in the leadership skills of women employees is an investment in an organization’s bottom line and should therefore be given special attention and consideration. Consulting psychologists who work with individual women and organizations to develop leadership skills can advocate for changes that support women’s progression to positions of leadership, which will strengthen their connections to the organizations. The implementation of this unique leadership development program that focuses

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on recognizing, addressing, and cultivating women's unique contributions while removing glass cliff phenomena by promoting awareness of gender issues at all organizational levels, will result in more women reaching their individual potential and in the transformation of organizations into cultures that value the unique, effective, and sustainable resources already present within their ranks.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. In what contexts have you served as a leader?
2. How do you define leadership?
3. What do you think led you to become a leader?
4. What leadership training have you received? Was it helpful?
5. Do you subscribe to any particular theories of leadership?
6. Reconstruct a day in your position from the moment you wake up to when you fall asleep.
7. Thinking back to your first experience in a leadership position, did your workplace encourage women to develop their leadership skills?
8. What forms of support did you need to be a successful leader?
9. What leaders do you look up to?
10. What is the toughest experience you have had as a leader?
11. What has been the most rewarding experience?
12. Given what you have said about your life before you became a leader and given what you have said about your work now, how do you understand leadership in your life?
13. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?
14. What factors interacted or contributed to bring you into your present position?
15. As you reflect on your leadership experiences, what emotions or thoughts come up?
16. If you could go back in time to when you had taken on your first leadership role and tell yourself one thing that you know now, what would it be?
17. Do you have any advice for other women who aspire to be leaders?

Appendix B

PACIFIC UNIVERSITY**INFORMED CONSENT TO ACT AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT****1. Study Title**

Women as leaders and the “Glass Cliff” phenomenon: Development of an organizational training program for future leaders

2. Study Personnel

Name	Shannon Anderson, M.S.	Jon Frew, Ph.D., ABPP
Role	Principle Investigator	Faculty Mentor
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3. Study Invitation, Purpose, Location, and Dates

You are invited to participate in a research study on women and leadership. This project has been approved by the Pacific University IRB and will be completed by July 2013. The researcher asks that you participate in a series of three 60-90 minute interviews to help advance our understanding of the possible barriers and support systems in many organizations that impact women’s abilities to become successful leaders. Each interview will be spaced approximately 3-7 days apart. Please read this form carefully and direct any questions you may have to the primary investigator before agreeing to be in this study. The results of this study will be used for the preparation of a formal doctoral dissertation.

4. Participant Characteristics and Exclusionary Criteria

Participants have been selected on the basis of their leadership experience. Participants must also be fluent in English and be willing to participate in all three interviews. Those who do not meet these requirements will be excluded from the study.

5. Study Materials and Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a series of three 60-90 minute interviews in which you will discuss your experience as a leader. The interviews will optimally be spaced no more than one week apart from each other, but we understand that busy schedules inherently limit participants' availabilities and so some flexibility will, of course, be necessary. This study will attempt to interview between 10 and 20 women. No additional costs will be incurred to you for partaking in this study.

For accuracy purposes only, we also ask that participants be audio recorded. Other than the primary interviewer and the faculty mentor, no other person will hear or have access to the recordings. At the conclusion of the study, all audio recordings will be destroyed. You may decline to be audio recorded, but unfortunately you will not be able to continue with the study.

6. Risks, Risk Reduction Steps and Clinical Alternatives

a. Unknown Risks:

It is possible that participation in this study may expose you (or an embryo or fetus, if you are or become pregnant) to currently unforeseeable risks.

b. Anticipated Risks and Strategies to Minimize/Avoid:

Interviews: Minimal risk is associated with this study. The primary risk to you is personal embarrassment if confidentiality were to be compromised. The research personnel will take every appropriate precaution to preserve confidentiality of all your information. It is also possible that you may be exposed to emotional risks, including self-questioning or distress regarding past work experiences and/or barriers they faced due to possible gender discrimination. You may refuse to answer any of the questions that they do not wish to answer. While distress over supplying information about one's leadership experiences is possible, there is nothing to suggest that it will be severe or long lasting.

Audio recording: It is possible that being audio taped or answering questions about sensitive issues may make you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. You may decline at any time to be audio recorded, and all of your information will be removed from the study.

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You will be supplied with the researcher's contact information. A full debriefing will include the purpose of the study, a description of the major methodological aspects of the study and how they relate to the purpose, the name and phone number of the experimenter in case you have questions about the study at a later date, as well as several references that you can read to learn more about this particular area of research.

7. Adverse Event Handling and Reporting Plan

The IRB office of Pacific University will be notified by the next normal business day if minor adverse events occur (e.g., a complaint is made by participants about the experimental procedure). All efforts will be made to correct the subject of the complaint if at all possible.

The IRB office will be notified within 24 hours if major adverse events occur (e.g., if a breach in confidentiality or any physical or emotional harm or injury occurs) and will be handled as follows: In the event that any physical or emotional harm or injury (e.g., emotional distress triggered by the study) occurs, study participants will be removed from the study, promptly debriefed, and given appropriate referrals for psychological care. In the unlikely event that a breach in confidentiality occurs, the participant(s) whose information has been compromised will be notified immediately and removed from the study in order to protect against further infringement on their confidentiality. In addition, the proper authorities will be notified.

8. Direct Benefits and/or Payment to Participants

This study is non-beneficial and you will not be paid for your participation. As researchers, we hope to better understand the subject of women leaders and to share that understanding as a possible contribution to the field and those affected by it. Participants may choose to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to a national bookstore. In order to be eligible for the drawing, you must check the box indicated on the informed consent and provide your name and contact information.

9. Promise of Privacy

The results of the data will be kept in a confidential manner. Although participants' names can be associated with the data, steps will be taken to ensure that no one except the principle investigator has access to the names of participants. Privacy and confidentiality will be protected by creating a master key list of participants names and a separate list of corresponding participant ID numbers, which will be kept in separate, locked file cabinets. All records associated with this study will be kept confidential. The informed consent forms will also be coded with identification numbers and will be stored separately from the interview transcripts. Completed transcripts and tapes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. The master list of participants, informed consent forms, and all other study related materials will be stored in a separate locked file cabinet. The primary investigator and the faculty advisor will be the only

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people to have access to this information. The master list linking surveys and consent forms to identifying information will be destroyed following the completion of this study.

With the exception of the dissertation committee chairperson, I will not discuss with anyone else any names, work locations, or identifying information about participants.

If the study is published, no information identifying the participants will be made. Every step will be taken to adequately disguise the participant's identity and work location in any published materials or presentations. All data that is published or presented for formal review will be anonymous data, without any corresponding identifying information other than basic demographic information. Although names can be associated with the corresponding data, steps will be taken to ensure that no one but the principle investigator can access them. In the unlikely event that I must break confidentiality, the study participant and the proper authorities will be notified. The conditions under which I may break confidentiality are as follows: (1) If child abuse or the abuse of vulnerable individuals is known or strongly suspected, or (2) if a participant is known or believed to be a threat to himself/herself or others.

10. Medical Care and Compensation In the Event of Accidental Injury

During your participation in this project it is important to understand that you are not a Pacific University clinic patient or client, nor will you be receiving mental health care as a result of your participation in this study. If you are injured during your participation in this study and it is not due to negligence by Pacific University, the researchers, or any organization associated with the research, you should not expect to receive compensation or medical care from Pacific University, the researchers, or any organization associated with the study.

11. Voluntary Nature of the Study

You do not have to join this or any other research study. If you do join, and later change your mind, you may quit at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Pacific University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw after beginning the study the data that was collected from you prior to withdrawal will be removed from the study.

12. Contacts and Questions

The researcher will be happy to answer any questions you may have at any time during the course of the study. If you are not satisfied with the answers you receive, please call Pacific University's Institutional Review Board, at (503) 352-1478 to discuss your questions or concerns further. If you become injured in some way and feel it is related to your participation in this study, please contact the investigators and/or the IRB office. All concerns and questions will be kept in confidence.

13. Statement of Consent

- | Yes | No | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | I am 18 years of age or over. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | All my questions have been answered. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | I have read and understand the description of my participation duties |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | I have been offered a copy of this form to keep for my records. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | I agree to participate in this study and understand that I may withdraw at any time without consequence |
-

Participant's Signature

Date

Investigator's Signature

Date

14. Participant Contact Information

This contact information is required in case any issues arise with the study and participants need to be notified and/or to provide participants with the results of the study.

Would you like to have a summary of the results after the study is completed?

Yes No
☐ ☐

Would you like to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate after the study is completed?

Yes No
☐ ☐

Participant's Name (Please Print): _____

Street Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Appendix C

Cover Letter

Dear [Participant],

I am directing a study about the various barriers and support systems in many organizations that impact women's abilities to become successful leaders. The goal is to gain a better understanding of women leaders' experiences in the workplace, which will contribute to the development of a leadership training program for newly appointed organizational leaders.

I ask for your assistance in this project. If you agree to participate, you will complete three 60-90 minute one-on-one interviews over the course of no more than one month. During each of the interviews, you will be asked to reflect upon your experiences as a leader and as a woman.

You were selected for possible participation in this study on the basis of your current or past experiences in a position of leadership. Your experience is very valuable to us, and we would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to include your experiences in this study. Additionally, you can be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 gift certificate to a national bookstore once all three interviews have been completed. Please be assured that your privacy is of great importance to us and we will strive to keep all of your information as confidential as possible.

A form asking for your voluntary consent to participate in this research is attached. Please review it and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate. This study requires you to reflect on your personal beliefs and experiences and may therefore magnify some feelings of distress. However, we do not expect that the distress will be great or long-lasting and minimal risk is associated with this study.

Please feel free to forward this invitation to any other women whom you believe are leaders. Even if you choose not to participate now, your generous act of passing on the invitation to someone else who may want to participate will ultimately help us understand more about leadership among women and aid us in our efforts to improve sources of organizational support for women in the future.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me at the phone number provided below. You may also direct questions regarding your rights as a research participant to the Institutional Review Board at (503) 352-1478.

Thank you for your time,

ADDRESSING GENDER BIAS

Shannon C. Anderson, M.S., CADC I

Primary Investigator

Pacific University

School of Professional Psychology

(503) 352-2611

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